



**SAN DIEGO STATE**  
**BASKETBALL**

**D.J. GAY**  
SENIOR | G

**KAWHI LEONARD**  
SOPHOMORE | F

**BILLY WHITE**  
SENIOR | F

**CHASE TAPLEY**  
SOPHOMORE | G

**MALCOLM THOMAS**  
SENIOR | F



**2011 BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**  
DIVISION I MEN'S BASKETBALL

WEST REGIONAL  
MARCH 24 AND 26  
ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA  
BIG WEST CONFERENCE, HOST



# SDSU Quick Facts



## General Information

Location . . . . . San Diego, Calif., 92182  
 Founded . . . . . 1897  
 Enrollment . . . . . 32,396  
 Nickname . . . . . Aztecs  
 Colors . . . . . Scarlet and Black  
 PMS Color . . . . . 185  
 Arena . . . . . Viejas Arena at Aztec Bowl  
 Opened . . . . . 1997  
 Capacity . . . . . 12,414  
 Affiliation . . . . . NCAA Division I  
 Conference . . . . . Mountain West  
 President . . . . . Dr. Stephen Weber  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . Bowling Green (1964)  
 Athletics Director . . . . . Jim Sterk  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . Western Washington (1980)  
 Athletic Department Phone . . . . . 619-594-3019  
 Ticket Office Phone . . . . . 619-283-7378  
 or 619-283-SDSU

## History

Seasons of Basketball . . . . . 90th  
 First Season of Basketball . . . . . 1921-22  
 All-Time Record . . . . . 1,288-1,043-1  
 NCAA Tournament Appearances . . . . . 10th  
 Seasons of Div. I Basketball . . . . . 41st  
 First Season of Div. I Basketball . . . . . 1970-71  
 All-Time Div. I Record . . . . . 600-598  
 NCAA Div. I Tournament Appearances . . . . . 7th  
 Last NCAA Appearance Before 2011 . . . . . 2010  
 NIT Appearances . . . . . 5  
 Last NIT Appearance . . . . . 2009

## Media Relations

Assistant AD/MBB . . . . . Mike May  
 SID Main Office Number . . . . . 619-594-5547  
 May Cell Phone . . . . . 619-957-8372  
 SID Fax Number . . . . . 619-582-6541  
 May E-mail . . . . . mmay@mail.sdsu.edu  
 Assistant MRD/MBB . . . . . Darin Wong  
 Wong E-mail . . . . . dwong@mail.sdsu.edu  
 SID Mailing Address . . . . . Aztec Media Relations  
 3014 Aztec Athletics Center  
 5302 55th Street  
 San Diego State University  
 San Diego, CA 92182

## Basketball Staff

Head Coach . . . . . Steve Fisher  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . Illinois State (1967)  
 Record at SDSU (Years) . . . . . 232-151 (12)  
 Record Overall (Years) . . . . . 416-233 (20 full)  
 Basketball Office Phone . . . . . 619-594-6249  
 Best Time to Contact Fisher . . . . . Contact May  
 Assistant Head Coach . . . . . Brian Dutcher  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . Minnesota (1982)  
 Assistant Coach . . . . . Justin Hutson  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . CS Bakersfield (1994)  
 Assistant Coach . . . . . Mark Fisher  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . Michigan (2001)  
 Director of Basketball Operations . . . . . Matt Soria  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . San Diego State (2002)  
 Director of Player Development . . . . . David Velasquez  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . San Diego State (2007)  
 Basketball Trainer . . . . . Mark Haines  
 Alma Mater (Year) . . . . . Metropolitan State (1987)  
 Administrative Assistant . . . . . Marty Malano

## Team Information

	Total	Home	Away	Neu.
2010-11 Record	34-2	14-1	12-1	8-0
2010-11 MWC Record	14-2	7-1	7-1	
Mountain West Finish	T-1st			
MWC Tournament	Champions (3-0)			
NCAA Tournament	2-0			

## Entering 2010-11

Starters Returning/Lost . . . . . 5/0  
 Letterwinners Returning/Lost . . . . . 9/5

## Media Information

Radio Station . . . . . AM 600 KOGO  
 Play-By-Play Announcer . . . . . Ted Leitner  
 PBP Phone Number . . . . . 858-560-6671  
 Video Footage Contact . . . . . David Berry  
 VFC Phone Number . . . . . 619-594-2428  
 Beat Writer . . . . . Mark Zeigler  
 The San Diego Union-Tribune  
 619-293-1341

## Media Services

SID Office Phone . . . . . 619-594-5547  
 SID Office Fax . . . . . 619-582-6541  
 Viejas Arena Press Row . . . . . 619-265-5853  
 SDSU Athletics Website . . . . . www.GoAztecs.com

## 2010-11 Roster Breakdown

### Guards (5)

Player	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Pos.	PPG	RPG
D.J. Gay	6-0	170	Sr.	G	11.0	*3.2
Chase Tapley	6-2	200	So.	G	8.7	2.4
James Rahon	6-5	205	So.	G	7.1	1.6
Jamaal Franklin	6-5	185	Fr.	G	3.0	1.9
LeBradford Franklin	6-2	170	Fr.	G	2.1	*1.4

### Forwards (6)

Player	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Pos.	PPG	RPG
Mehdi Cheriet	6-8	225	Sr.	F	1.8	1.0
Malcolm Thomas	6-9	220	Sr.	F	11.4	8.1
Billy White	6-8	235	Sr.	F	10.1	4.4
Tim Shelton	6-7	245	Jr.	F	1.7	1.6
Kawhi Leonard	6-7	225	So.	F	15.6	10.6
Alex Williams	6-6	245	So.	F	2.1	1.4

### Centers (1)

Player	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Pos.	PPG	RPG
Brian Carlwell	6-11	300	Sr.	C	3.8	2.7

### Redshirts (1)

Player	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Pos.	PPG	RPG
Xavier Thames	6-3	185	So.	Redshirt		

\* - Indicates assists per game.

### Award Winners

Steve Fisher - MWC Co-Coach of the Year,  
 USBWA IX Coach of the Year  
 D.J. Gay - Bob Cousy Award Finalist, All-MWC  
 first team, MWC all-tournament team, NABC  
 All-District 17 (first team)  
 Kawhi Leonard - All-MWC first team, MWC all-  
 defensive team, MWC all-tournament team,  
 USBWA All-District IX (first team), NABC  
 All-District 17 (first team), FOXSports.com  
 All-American (second team)  
 Malcolm Thomas - All-MWC second team,  
 MWC all-defensive team  
 Billy White - All-MWC honorable mention,  
 MWC all-tournament team

# AZTEC BASKETBALL

SAN DIEGO STATE MEDIA RELATIONS | 5302 55th STREET, SAN DIEGO, CA 92182 | PHONE: (619) 594-5547 | FAX: (619) 582-6541



(3) (9/8) **Connecticut** (28-9; 9-9 Big East) vs.  
(2) (6/5) **San Diego State** (34-2; 14-2 Mountain West)

Date	Thursday, March 24, 2011
Tipoff	4:15 p.m. PDT
Location	Anaheim, Calif.
Arena	Honda Center (17,608)
Television	CBS HD: Verne Lundquist, Bill Raftery and Lesley Visser
Radio	Westwood One: Wayne Larrivee, Bill Frieder AM 600 KOGO; Ted Leitner
Live Stats	GoAztecs.com

	San Diego State	Connecticut
Record	34-2	28-9
Conf. Rec.	14-2, T-1st	9-9, T-9th
RPI	3	14
Sagarin	4	13
Last 5/10	5-0/9-1	5-0/8-2
Coach	Steve Fisher	Jim Calhoun
Career	416-233 (20th full)	851-367 (39th season)
at School	232-151 (12th season)	603-230 (25th season)

## Schedule

**Overall: 34-2 MWC: 14-2**  
**Home: 14-1; Away: 12-1; Neutral: 8-0**

N.13	at Long Beach St.	W, 81-65
N.16	*at (11/12) Gonzaga	W, 79-76
N.20	*vs. Green Bay	W, 79-70
N.21	*vs. IUPUI	W, 61-46
N.22	*at Miami (Ohio)	W, 77-56
N.26	San Diego Christian	W, 88-69
D.1	Saint Mary's	W, 69-55
D.4	Wichita St.	W, 83-69
D.8	at California	W, 77-57
D.11	San Diego	W, 77-49
D.13	Cal Poly	W, 51-45
D.18	UC Santa Barbara	W, 90-64
D.21	*vs. San Francisco	W, 62-56
D.22	*vs. IUPUI	W, 56-54
D.31	Occidental	W, 93-50
J.5	*at TCU	W, 66-53
J.8	*at Utah	W, 71-62
J.12	*UNLV	W, 55-49
J.15	*at New Mexico	W, 87-77
J.19	*Air Force	W, 68-55
J.26	*at (9/9) BYU	L, 58-71
J.29	*Wyoming	W, 96-57
F.2	*at Colorado St.	W, 56-54
F.5	*TCU	W, 60-53
F.8	*Utah	W, 85-53
F.12	*at UNLV	W, 63-57
F.16	*New Mexico	W, 68-62
F.19	*at Air Force	W, 70-58
F.26	*(7/7) BYU	L, 67-80
M.1	*at Wyoming	W, 85-58
M.5	*Colorado St.	W, 66-48
M.10	*vs. Utah (QF)	W, 64-50
M.11	*at UNLV (SF)	W, 74-72
M.12	*vs. (8/8) BYU (CH)	W, 72-54
M.17	#vs. No. Colorado	W, 68-50
M.19	#vs. Temple	2ot-W, 71-64
<b>M.24</b>	<b>*vs. (9/8) UConn</b>	<b>TBA</b>

+ - CBE Classic; ^ - CBE Classic (Oxford, Ohio); \$ - Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic (Las Vegas, Nev.); \* - MWC game; ` MWC Championship (Las Vegas, Nev.); # - NCAA Tournament (Tucson, Ariz.); ~ - NCAA Tournament (Anaheim, Calif.).

## San Diego State at the 2011 NCAA Basketball Championship West Regional | March 24 and 26 | Honda Center | Anaheim, Calif.

Date: Regional Semifinals - March 24, 2011 | Regional Finals - March 26, 2011

San Diego State Travel Plans: The Aztecs will depart for Anaheim, Calif., Tuesday afternoon.

Interviews/Practice Schedule: San Diego State coach Steve Fisher and SDSU student-athletes in the normal rotation will be available for media interviews on Wednesday at Honda Center (see schedule below). Fisher and select student-athletes will attend the news conference, while other players will be available during that time in the locker room. This will be the only availability for interviews on Wednesday or Thursday, prior to Thursday afternoon's regional semifinal game.

San Diego State assistant athletic director for media relations Mike May, assistant media relations director Darin Wong and assistant media relations director Jamie McConeghy will be present in Anaheim. Any questions regarding SDSU's schedule and/or availability may be directed to any of them.

### Wednesday Schedule (all times PDT)

Noon	Connecticut Practice
1:00	Connecticut Coach Jim Calhoun News Conference
1:15	Connecticut Student-Athletes News Conference
1:30	▶ San Diego State Student-Athletes News Conference
1:45	▶ San Diego State Coach Steve Fisher News Conference
2:10	▶ San Diego State Practice

### Thursday Schedule (all times PDT)

4:15 p.m.	▶ (3) Connecticut vs. (2) SDSU
6:45 p.m.	(5) Arizona vs. (1) Duke

Media Headquarters: Anaheim Marriott - 700 West Convention Way, Anaheim, CA 92802. Phone: (714) 750-8000.

Team Headquarters: Doubletree Orange - 100 The City Drive, Orange, CA 92868. Phone: (714) 634-4500.

## Aztecs At-A-Glance

No.	Name (Career G/GS)	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	PPG	RPG	Misc.	Note	▶ - Projected Starter
0	Alec Williams (22/0)	F	6-6	245	So.	2.1	1.4	10 GP	Played in 22 career games; Season high 9 pts. vs. Occidental	
3	LaBradford Franklin (17/1)	G	6-2	170	Fr.	2.1	0.9	1.4 apg	1st career start vs. Cal Poly; 21 ast. last 11 gms., 12 pts. in his last 4 gms.	
4	▶ Malcolm Thomas (102/97)	F	6-9	220	Sr.	11.4	8.1	53.5 FG	4x MWC PoW; Last 7 gms.: Made 29-of-54 FGs (53.7 pct.); 20 asts. last 5 gms.	
5	Brian Carlwell (99/4)	C	6-11	300	Sr.	3.8	2.7	52.0 FG	Played in all 36 games; Last 12 gms.: 51 pts., 41 rebs., 19-36 FGs, 156 mins.	
10	Tim Shelton (77/18)	F	6-7	245	Jr.	1.7	1.6	9.7 mpg	Scored in four of his last six games; Has a 1.33 assist-to-turnover ratio	
11	James Rahon (68/23)	G	6-5	205	So.	7.1	1.6	43.3 3FG	Made 34 3FGs in last 22 gms.; 1 TO in last 103 mins.	
15	▶ Kawhi Leonard (69/68)	F	6-7	225	So.	15.6	10.6	2.5 apg	Wooden candidate; 23 double-doubles this year (T-SDSU single season record), 40 career	
21	Jamaal Franklin (21/0)	G	6-5	185	Fr.	3.0	1.9	21 GP	Played in 12 of last 15 gms.; 26 points in last six games (4.3 ppg)	
22	▶ Chase Tapley (66/47)	G	6-2	200	So.	8.7	2.4	49.8 FG	Made 30 of his last 75 3FGA; Trey in 14 of last 16 gms.; CH 8 rebs. at AFA	
23	▶ D.J. Gay (139/119)	G	6-0	170	Sr.	11.0	2.1	3.2 apg	Team captain; 1 turnover in last 3 GP (118 MP); 15 treys in last 10 gms.	
32	▶ Billy White (133/123)	F	6-8	235	Sr.	10.1	4.4	55.6 FG	CH 30 pts at Gonzaga; 3 straight double-doubles; 10+ pts. last 6 gms.	
42	Mehdi Cheriet (57/2)	F	6-9	225	Sr.	1.8	1.0	21 GP	Played in 7 of last 15 gms.; Season-high 7 pts., 3 rebs. vs. SDCC	

Head Coach: Steve Fisher (Illinois State, 1967) • 416-233 (20th full season overall) • 232-151 (12th season at SDSU)

Assistant Head Coach: Brian Dutcher (Minnesota, 1982) Assistant Coaches: Justin Hutson (CS Bakersfield, 1994), Mark Fisher (Michigan, 2001)

Director of Operations: Matt Soria (San Diego State, 2002) Director of Player Development: David Velasquez (San Diego State, 2007)

Athletic Trainer: David Smith (Biola, 2004)

# #6/5 San Diego State

2010-11 Record: 34-2; 14-2 MWC, T-1st  
 2011 NCAA Tournament Participants, MWC Champions

- The Aztecs have won at least 20 games in a school-record six straight seasons and 25 games in three straight seasons.
- San Diego State has advanced to postseason play each of the last six seasons (2006 NCAA, 2007-09 NIT, 2010 and 2011 NCAA).

### Trends:

- SDSU has won 59 of the last 63 dating back to the 2006-07 season when scoring at least 71 points.
- SDSU has won 42 straight games vs. non-ranked opponents and 32 consecutive home games against teams not in the AP Top 25.

Number	Name	Position	Height	Weight	Year	High School	PPG	RPG	APG	FG	3FG	FT	Notes
<b>0</b>	<b>Alec Williams</b>	Forward	6-6	245	So.-1L	San Juan Capistrano, Calif. (JSerra High)	10-11: 2.1 MWC: 2.3 Career Highs: Points: 11 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09) Rebounds: 7 vs. UCSD (11-14-09) Assists: 1 - three times	Plays in 10 games this season... Saw first action of the season vs. San Diego Christian (2 pts., 4 reb., 0 turnovers, 8 mins)... One turnover in 49 mins. this season (10 GP); 4 turnovers in 136 career mins... SH 9 pts., 4 rebs. in 14 mins. vs. Occidental... Has 9 rebounds in last 4 gms. (28 mins.)... Scored two points at Wyoming.					
<b>3</b>	<b>LaBradford Franklin</b>	Guard	6-2	170	Fr.-HS	Temecula, Calif. (Great Oak High)	10-11: 2.1 MWC: 2.7 Career Highs: Points: 9 vs. SDCC (11-26-10) Rebounds: 3 vs. SMC (12-1-10) Assists: 6 vs. SDCC (11-26-10)	Played 17 games this year... 19 reb. in last 5 gms. (3.8)... 23 ast. in last 14 gms... 6 assists, 9 rebounds in last three games (49 mins.)... Started 1st career game vs. Cal Poly (2 ast., CH 2 stl.)... 6 pts., 3 rebs. vs. Saint Mary's... Led team with 6 ast. vs. S.D. Christian; also added 9 pts., in 20 mins... CH 4 FTs, 3 ast. vs. USD... 6 pts., 4 rebs. at Wyoming.					
<b>4</b>	<b>Malcolm Thomas</b>	Forward	6-9	220	Sr.-1L	San Diego, Calif. (SDCC)	10-11: 11.4 MWC: 11.4 Career Highs: Points: 28 vs. Utah (2-20-10) Rebounds: 16 - two times Assists: 8 vs. Utah (3-10-11)	4x MWC POW... 1,180 career pts... 10+ pts. in 17 of last 26 gms... 20 asts. last 5 gms. (including a career-high 8 vs. Utah)... 19 career double-doubles... 89 for last 130 from FT (.685)... 142 for last 260 from field (.546)... 69 blks. last 30 gm. (2.3 bpg)... 234 reb. last 26 gm. (9.0 rpg)... 30 career 10+ reb. gms... 2nd in SDSU career blocks (127 at SDSU; 191 career total).					
<b>5</b>	<b>Brian Carlwell</b>	Center	6-11	300	Sr.-1L	Maywood, Ill. (Univ. of Illinois)	10-11: 3.8 MWC: 4.3 Career Highs: Points: 15 vs. Wyoming (3-1-11) Rebounds: 10 vs. Wyo. (1-29-11) Assists: 4 at BYU (3-3-10)	1 of 4 Aztec regulars shooting at least 50 percent from field (.520)... 84 pts. and 78 rebs. in the last 22 games (covering 272 mins.)... 19 turnover-free games, including 12 of last 21... 48 for last 92 from field in last 32 gms. (.522)... At least 1 reb. in CH 15 straight gms... Started 1st game of season vs. Occidental (7 pts., CH 6 rebs.)... CH 15 pts, 8 rebs. at Wyoming.					
<b>10</b>	<b>Tim Shelton</b>	Forward	6-7	245	Jr.-2L	Fresno, Calif. (Clovis West High)	10-11: 1.7 MWC: 1.5 Career Highs: Points: 17 - two times Rebounds: 12 vs. UNLV (3-7-09) Assists: 4 - three times	Returned to action against CSU after missing the game at Wyo. (strep throat)... Made 3 of last 4 3FGA after opening season 1-for-13... Played in 30 games this yr... Made 14 of last 27 FGA (.519 pct.)... 1 turnover or less in each game this season... Season-high 20 mins., 3 pts., 2 rebs., at Miami (OH)... Scored in four of his last six games.					
<b>11</b>	<b>James Rahon</b>	Guard	6-5	205	So.-TR	San Diego, Calif. (Santa Clara Univ.)	10-11: 7.1 MWC: 6.7 Career Highs: Points: 25 - two times Rebounds: 5 vs. Portland (2-28-09) Assists: 5 - two times	Leads team in 3FG pct. (.430), 2nd in 3FG (52)... Had a trey in CH 16 straight gms., strk. broken 3/5 vs. CSU... 32 3FGs in last 21 gms... 14 games this season with multiple treys... 11 double-fig. scoring gms. this year... 15 gms. with 8 or more pts... 3-for-4 from distance in NCAAs... Started 1st gm. as Aztec vs. Cal Poly (14 pts.)... CH 5 3FG, SH 15 pts. vs. Occidental.					
<b>15</b>	<b>Kawhi Leonard</b>	Forward	6-7	225	So.-1L	Riverside, Calif. (King High)	10-11: 15.6 MWC: 14.8 Career Highs: Points: 26 vs. Wyoming (2-10-10) Rebounds: 21 at UNLV (3-13-10) Assists: 5 - four times	Wooden final-20 candidate... Midseason Naismith Top-30 list... 3x MWC POW this year... 40 career double-doubles (2nd SDSU history)... Double-doubles in 15 of last 22 games... 42 career 10+ reb. gms... 4th in the country in double-doubles w/23 and 9th in reb. (thru Sun.)... MWC rankings: 1st rebs, 4th in pts., 4th in steals, 7th in FT pct... Made last 11 FTA.					
<b>21</b>	<b>Jamaal Franklin</b>	Guard	6-5	185	Fr.-HS	Phelan, Calif. (Westwind Prep International)	10-11: 3.0 MWC: 3.3 Career Highs: Points: 13 vs. Utah (2-8-11) Rebounds: 10 vs. Utah (2-8-11) Assists: 2 vs. Utah (2-8-11)	Played in 6 of last 7 games; 21 overall... 38 reb. last 17 gms. (152 mins)... 29 rebounds in the last 14 games... Averaged 5.3 pts. in 9.0 minutes at the MWC Championship... Entered MWCs 3-13 from 3, but was 4-8 in MWC tourney... 1st career double-double w/CH 13 pts., CH 10 rebs., CH 2 asts. vs. Utah (2-8-11)... 6 pts., 4 rebs. at Wyoming.					
<b>22</b>	<b>Chase Tapley</b>	Guard	6-2	200	So.-1L	Sacramento, Calif. (Sacramento High)	10-11: 8.7 MWC: 8.8 Career Highs: Points: 24 vs. Wyo. (1-29-11) Rebounds: 8 at Air Force (2-19-11) Assists: 9 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)	12+ pts. last three games (1st time this season), which ties career-long... One turnover or less in 14 of last 21 gms. and in 21 gms. this season... Has a 3FGM in 18 of last 21 gms... 2nd on team w/44 stls... Made 71-of-122 2FGs (.582)... Made 20 of last 21 free throw attempts... CH 24 pts., 10-15 FGs, 3-6 3FGs vs. Wyoming... 8-15 3FGA in last three games.					
<b>23</b>	<b>D.J. Gay</b>	Guard	6-0	170	Sr.-3L	Sun Valley, Calif. (Poly High)	10-11: 11.0 MWC: 11.6 Career Highs: Points: 30 at New Mexico (1-15-11) Rebounds: 6 - three times Assists: 7 - two times	Was 1 of 10 Cousy Award finalists... Played in all 139 gms since his arrival (played in a school-record 105 wins)... 119 starts, incl. 70 straight... Strk. of no TOs in 177 mins. broken vs. UNM... 111 ast., 35 TO last 33 gms (3.4 avg, 1.1 tpg)... 9 career 20-pt gms... 1,162 career pts... Back-to-back 20-pt gms. for 1st time of career at UNM, vs. AFA... 20 pts., 6-11 3FGs vs. AFA... CH 30 pts., 7-11 3FGs at UNM.					
<b>32</b>	<b>Billy White</b>	Forward	6-8	235	Sr.-3L	Las Vegas, Nev. (Green Valley High)	10-11: 10.1 MWC: 8.5 Career Highs: Points: 30 at Gonzaga (11-16-10) Rebounds: 13 - two times Assists: 4 - six times	Last 6 gms.: 14.2 ppg, 9.2 rpg, 1.7 apg, 16-18 FTs... 1,280 career pts., 25th Aztec to reach 1K pts... 3 straight double-doubles... Started career-long 51 straight gms in which he's played... 10+ pts. in season-high 6 straight games... CH 30 pts., 9 reb. at No. 11 Gonzaga... 24 pts. (10-12 FG) vs. Wichita St... 21 pts., 12 reb., 5 stl. vs. BYU in MWC final... CH 13 reb. last two games.					
<b>42</b>	<b>Mehdi Cheriet</b>	Forward	6-9	225	Sr.-1L	Tarare, France (Arizona Western College)	10-11: 1.8 MWC: 1.9 Career Highs: Points: 14 - two times Rebounds: 6 - two times Assists: 2 - four times	Active this season after redshirting in 2009-10... Played in 35 games and avg. 14.1 minutes in 2008-09... 4 blks. last 14 gms (96 min)... Season-high 7 pts., 3 rebs. in 18 mins., vs. San Diego Christian... 6 pts. (3-4 FG), 2 reb. in 5 mins. vs. Wichita State... 2 blk. in 2 mins. at California... 8 pts., 3 rebs. vs. Wyoming... 5 pts. at Wyoming					

## Schedule/Results

Date	Opponent (Television)	Time/Result	Note
N.13	at Long Beach State	W, 81-65	▶ Leonard posts 18th career double-double (21 pts., 12 reb.), Gay goes for 20 pts
<b>O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic</b>			
N.16	at No. 11/12 Gonzaga (ESPN2)	W, 79-76	▶ White scores a career-high 30 points; Aztecs outrebound Zags, 39-29, and deliver GU's 5th-ever loss at facility
N.20	vs. Green Bay (Oxford, Ohio)	W, 79-70	▶ Aztecs rally from 22 down in first half to win; Largest comeback for victory in Steve Fisher era
N.21	vs. IUPUI (Oxford, Ohio)	W, 61-46	▶ SDSU hit 7-of-10 three-pointers in second half; Leonard: 20 pts., 10 rebs., White: 14 pts., 6 rebs.
N.22	at Miami (Ohio)	W, 77-56	▶ Aztecs go on 25-2 run in first half, 25-0 run in second half to rout RedHawks
N.26	SAN DIEGO CHRISTIAN	W, 88-69	▶ Tied home record non-conference winning streak (16); SDSU owned 60-20 adv. in points in the paint
D.1	SAINT MARY'S (The Mtn.)	W, 69-55	▶ Tapley leads team with 14 pts., Thomas adds 12 pts., 6 rebs., career-high 6 blocks
<b>Mountain West-Missouri Valley Challenge</b>			
D.4	WICHITA STATE (The Mtn.)	W, 83-69	▶ SDSU goes on 14-0 run in second half in 71-second span, White scored 9 of 14 and finished with 24 points
D.8	at California (CSN California, 4SD)	W, 77-57	▶ Aztecs snap 20-game losing streak to Pac-10 foes, break 19-losing streak at Power 6 leagues
D.11	SAN DIEGO (4SD)	W, 77-49	▶ Thomas connects on career-high eight free throws (8-9), finishes with 20 points; Leonard 13 points, 13 rebs.
D.13	CAL POLY	W, 51-45	▶ Thomas: 18 points, 15 rebounds, 5 blocks; Leonard, Tapley: DNP - flu-like symptoms; Overcome 0-18 3FG
D.18	UC SANTA BARBARA	W, 90-64	▶ Aztecs shoot blistering 69.0 percent in first half, 56.1 for game; 6 players score 10+; Thomas: 18 pts., 10 rebs.
<b>Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic (South Point Arena; Las Vegas, Nev.)</b>			
D.21	vs. San Francisco	W, 62-56	▶ Leonard goes for season-high 23 points, season-high 14 rebounds
D.22	vs. IUPUI	W, 56-54	▶ Gay scores team-high 18 points; Aztecs defeat Jaguars for second time this season
D.31	OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE	W, 93-50	▶ SDSU goes 21-for-24 from field in second half (.875); Rahon hits career-high 5 3FG, finishes with 15 points
J.5	*at TCU (The Mtn.)	W, 66-53	▶ Aztecs improve to 5-1 in Fort Worth in MWC games; Thomas: 18 pts., 10 rebs; Leonard: 14 pts., 11 rebs.
J.8	*at Utah (VERSUS)	W, 71-62	▶ SDSU wins for just the fourth time at Huntsman; Thomas: 17 pts., 14 rebs.; Leonard: 20 pts.; Gay: 18 pts.
J.12	*UNLV (CBS College, 4SD)	W, 55-49	▶ Leonard (15 pts., 17 rebs.) and Thomas (14 pts., 16 rebs.) outrebound UNLV by themselves, 33-31
J.15	*at New Mexico (CBS College, 4SD)	W, 87-77	▶ Gay hits 7 three-pointers, finishes with career-high 30 points; Leonard goes for 19 points, 15 rebounds
J.19	*AIR FORCE (4SD)	W, 68-55	▶ Gay goes off again, this time hitting six three-pointers en route to 20 points; White scores 10 in key 13-3 run
J.26	*at No. 9/9 BYU (CBS College, 4SD)	L, 58-71	▶ Leonard goes off for 22 points and 15 rebounds, but SDSU can't overcome Fredette's 43 points
J.29	*WYOMING (The Mtn.)	W, 96-57	▶ Tapley leads Aztecs with career-high 24 pts; all 12 Aztecs score; SDSU wins by largest margin in MWC history
F.2	*at Colorado State (CBS College, 4SD)	W, 56-54	▶ Gay hits game-winner with 1.8 seconds left; Rahon team-high 15 pts. off bench; Leonard: 12 pts., 15 rebs.
F.5	*TCU (The Mtn.)	W, 60-53	▶ White scores game-high 19 pts. (9-10 FT); Thomas: 11 pts., game-high 14 rebs.; Leonard: 11 pts., 10 rebs.
F.8	*UTAH (The Mtn.)	W, 85-53	▶ 5 Aztecs score in double figures; Leonard: 12 pts., 14 rebs.; J. Franklin: 13 pts., 10 rebs. off bench
F.12	*at UNLV (CBS College, 4SD)	W, 63-57	▶ Gay played 40 turnover-free minutes and scores a game-high 20 pts.; SDSU limits UNLV to 6.7 percent from 3
F.16	*NEW MEXICO (The Mtn.)	W, 68-62	▶ Thomas and Leonard each score 22 pts., Gay's turnover-free streak snapped at 177 minutes
F.19	*at Air Force (The Mtn.)	W, 70-58	▶ Thomas: 20 pts., 13 rebs.; Leonard: 18 pts., 15 rebs.; SDSU outrebounds AFA, 50-27
F.26	*No. 7/7 BYU (CBS)	L, 67-80	▶ BYU goes 14-for-24 from distance; Leonard: 17 pts., 13 rebs., Tapley: 11 pts., Thomas: 11 rebs.
M.1	*at Wyoming (The Mtn.)	W, 85-58	▶ Four Aztecs score in double figures; Thomas: 15 pts., 11 rebs., Cartwell: Career-high 15 pts. off bench
M.5	*COLORADO STATE (The Mtn.)	W, 66-48	▶ SDSU shoots 18-for-19 from free-throw line and 50 percent in second half; Leonard: 17 pts., 12 rebs.
<b>Conoco Mountain West Conference Basketball Championship (Thomas &amp; Mack Center, Las Vegas, Nev.)</b>			
M.10	vs. (7) Utah (Quarterfinals) (The Mtn., 4SD)	W, 64-50	▶ Thomas: 13 pts., 10 reb., 8 ast.; Aztecs win fifth in a row over Utah
M.11	at (3) UNLV (Semifinals) (CBS College, 4SD)	W, 74-72	▶ Gay hits game-winner with 4.9 seconds left and finished with 15 points
M.12	vs. (1) No. 8/8 BYU (Finals) (VERSUS)	W, 72-54	▶ White: 1st double-double this season: 21 pts., 12 rebs.; Leonard: 20 pts., 8 reb.; SDSU back-to-back champs
<b>NCAA Basketball Championship</b>			
M.17	vs. (15) Northern Colorado (2R) (TNT)	W, 68-50	▶ SDSU picks up first-ever Division I NCAA Tournament win; Leonard: 21 pts., 10 reb., White: 12 pts., 13 rebs.
M.18	vs. (7) Temple (3R) (TNT)	2ot-W, 71-64	▶ White: 16 pts., CH 13 reb., 3rd straight double-double; Leonard: 16 pts., 9 reb.; Thomas: 13 pts., 9 reb.; 1st Sweet 16 bid ever
M.24	vs. (3) No. 9/8 Connecticut (R16) (CBS)	4:15 p.m. PT	▶ SDSU looks for third straight NCAA Tournament win, a first in school history (Division I or Division II)

\* - Indicates Mountain West Conference game.

## San Diego State and Connecticut Meet in Only Top-10 Sweet 16 Match-Up in the NCAA Tournament Thursday Afternoon on CBS

Two of the seven remaining top-10 teams in the Associated Press Top 25 meet in the first West Regional semifinal game on Thursday when second-seeded and No. 6/5 San Diego State (34-2) faces third-seeded and No. 9/8 Connecticut (28-9) at the 2011 NCAA Tournament.

Game time is set for 4:15 p.m. PT at Honda Center in Anaheim, Calif., (94.22 miles from San Diego State's Viejas Arena) and the contest will be televised nationally in high definition on CBS. Radio coverage is available nationally on Westwood One Radio and in Southern California on AM 600 KOGO.

After going 15,713 days without an NCAA Tournament victory, San Diego State picked up its second win in the 2011 tournament in approximately 50 hours with a 71-64 double overtime victory over seventh-seeded Temple. The Aztecs enjoyed a 42-35 rebound advantage and SDSU once again had a stellar defensive performance. For the 23rd time this season, San Diego State held an opponent to 40-percent-or-less shooting from the field, limiting the Owls to 37.9 percent.

Senior forward Billy White, who had two double-doubles in the first 131 games of his career, recorded his third consecutive double-double with 16 points and a career-high 13 rebounds. Sophomore forward Kawhi Leonard posted his career-high 14th consecutive double-digit scoring effort with 16 points, nine rebounds and three assists, while senior forward Malcolm Thomas added 13 points, nine rebounds, four blocked shots and three assists. Sophomore guard Chase Tapley connected on 4-of-5 three-point field goals en route to 12 points, and senior point guard D.J. Gay played every second of the 50-minute contest and chipped in with nine points, six rebounds and five assists.

The victory was the seventh in a row for the Aztecs, who are the only team from the state of California and the only team in the Pacific Time Zone to advance to the Sweet 16. During the current winning streak, SDSU has not trailed at any point by more than six points and trailed for a total 24:13 in the 290 minutes during the span.

No team in the country has more victories (34) and no team in the nation has fewer losses (2) than San Diego State. The Aztecs are tied with Kansas and Ohio State for the nation's best record. The Aztecs also rank among the national leaders in many categories (through Sunday): third in fewest personal fouls (14.7), seventh in scoring defense (58.8), seventh in scoring margin (+13.2), 12th in rebound margin (+6.9), 17th in fewest turnovers (10.9) and 26th in three-point field-goal percentage defense (31.4).

San Diego State and Connecticut are meeting for the first time. More surprising is that Steve Fisher and Jim Calhoun, two coaches with national championship rings and two of the most successful NCAA Tournament coaches in history, have never crossed paths while advancing through the tournament. Fisher, who won the 1989 NCAA title, has advanced to three championship games (1989, 1992, 1993), and owns a NCAA Tournament record of 22-9 (71.0 percent), and Calhoun, who won the 1999 and 2004 national titles and is 42-13 (76.4 percent) in the NCAA Tournament, will face each other for the first time on Thursday.

Steve Fisher is 4-0 in NCAA regional semifinal games with victories coming in 1989, 1992, 1993 and 1994.

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**AP Top 25**

March 14, 2011

Rk.	Team	Record	Pts.
1.	Ohio St. (51)	32-2	1,611
2.	Kansas (14)	32-2	1,574
3.	Duke	30-4	1,472
4.	Pittsburgh	27-5	1,406
5.	Notre Dame	26-6	1,332
6.	<b>San Diego St.</b>	<b>32-2</b>	<b>1,322</b>
7.	North Carolina	26-7	1,189
8.	Texas	27-7	1,069
9.	Connecticut	26-9	1,019
10.	BYU	30-4	977
11.	Kentucky	25-8	928
12.	Syracuse	26-7	922
13.	Purdue	25-7	903
14.	Louisville	25-9	874
15.	Florida	26-7	840
16.	Wisconsin	23-8	619
17.	Arizona	27-7	516
18.	St. John's	21-11	433
19.	Utah St.	30-3	333
20.	Xavier	24-7	270
21.	Kansas St.	22-10	240
22.	West Virginia	20-11	178
23.	Washington	23-10	176
24.	Texas A&M	24-8	152
25.	Vanderbilt	23-10	130

**Others receiving votes:** Georgetown 129, Temple 124, Cincinnati 115, Old Dominion 65, Richmond 47, UNLV 38, Gonzaga 30, Butler 18, Villanova 17, Missouri 13, Belmont 13, George Mason 10, Memphis 7, Clemson 4, Colorado 3, Marquette 3, UCLA 3, Long Island 1.

**USA Today/ESPN Top 25**

March 13, 2011

Rk.	Team	Record	Pts.
1.	Ohio St. (26)	32-2	770
2.	Kansas (5)	32-2	749
3.	Duke	30-4	703
4.	Pittsburgh	27-5	665
5.	<b>San Diego St.</b>	<b>32-2</b>	<b>619</b>
6.	Notre Dame	26-6	607
7.	North Carolina	26-7	580
8.	Connecticut	26-9	501
9.	Texas	27-7	472
10.	Kentucky	25-8	468
11.	Louisville	25-9	450
12.	BYU	30-4	440
13.	Florida	26-7	405
14.	Syracuse	26-7	402
15.	Purdue	25-7	392
16.	Wisconsin	23-8	301
17.	Utah St.	30-3	273
18.	Arizona	27-7	270
19.	St. John's	21-11	204
20.	Texas A&M	24-8	143
21.	Vanderbilt	23-10	116
22.	Xavier	24-7	107
23.	Washington	23-10	71
24.	Kansas St.	22-10	61
25.	Georgetown	21-10	59

**Others receiving votes:** Temple 46, West Virginia 42, Richmond 35, Cincinnati 25, Old Dominion 18, Gonzaga 17, Missouri 16, George Mason 14, UCLA 10, UNLV 9, Butler 5, Penn St. 3, Princeton 3, Memphis 2, Saint Mary's 2.

**BOLD** - 2010-11 Opponents

**San Diego State Career Statistics in NCAA Tournament**

Player	G-GS	FG-A	PCT.	3FG-A	PCT.	FT-A	PCT.	REB	AVG.	A	TO	BS	ST	PTS	AVG	HI
Kawhi Leonard	3-3	19-43	.442	3-10	.300	8-8	1.000	31	10.3	7	7	4	4	49	16.3	21
Billy White	3-3	16-35	.457	1-2	.500	2-4	.500	27	9.0	4	5	1	4	35	11.7	16
D.J. Gay	3-3	9-32	.281	4-15	.267	8-8	1.000	13	4.3	9	2	1	0	30	10.0	16
Chase Tapley	3-2	10-21	.476	6-14	.429	2-3	.667	7	2.3	4	3	2	3	28	9.3	14
Malcolm Thomas	3-3	10-24	.417	0-0	.000	5-8	.625	17	5.7	8	6	7	2	25	8.3	13
James Rahon	2-0	5-10	.500	3-4	.750	2-2	1.000	2	1.0	0	0	0	1	15	7.5	12
Brian Carlwell	3-0	2-7	.286	0-1	.000	1-2	.500	11	3.7	1	1	2	0	5	1.7	3
Jamaal Franklin	1-0	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Tim Shelton	2-0	0-2	.000	0-1	.000	0-0	.000	2	1.0	0	1	0	0	0	0.0	0

**What You Need to Know**

**BEST STARTS**

► San Diego State is 34-2 and has posted its best 36-game record in school history. This is the 90th season of Aztec basketball. Prior to this season, the best 36-game record in school history was 26-10, which was set by the 2008-09 squad.

► The Aztecs' 34 victories are the most in school history. The previous record of 26 was set by the 2008-09 NIT semifinalists, which finished the year with a mark of 26-10.

► San Diego State shares the nation's best record at 34-2 entering the Sweet 16 (Kansas and Ohio State), and is one of three teams in the country with two losses (Kansas, Ohio State).

► Entering the round of 16 at the NCAA Tournament, San Diego State owns the most wins in the nation (34), along with Kansas and Ohio State.

► SDSU is the only school in the country to have lost to just one team this season. Both of the Aztecs' defeats have come to Brigham Young.

► In the first 87 seasons of basketball at San Diego State, the Aztecs never had a 25-win season. Now they have three straight seasons with 25 or more. In 2008-09, SDSU won a school-record 26 games, last year it won 25 contests and this season the Aztecs are up to 34 wins. Through March 6, only nine schools in the country had won 25 or more games each of the last three seasons (2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11): Brigham Young, Duke, Kansas, Old Dominion, Pittsburgh, Purdue, San Diego State, Syracuse and Utah State.

**INSIDE THE RECORD**

► Of San Diego State's 34 wins this season, 21 have been by double digits.

► The Aztecs have 20 road/neutral wins this season (20-1), which is the most among AP top-10 squads. The chart in the next column shows the most road/neutral wins among the RPI top 60 at the end of the season and entering the NCAA Tournament.

► San Diego State finished the regular season with an impressive 11-2 record against teams ranked in the top 70 of the RPI.

► Another example of San Diego State's ability to win away

**Most Victories/SDSU History**

Rk.	Season	Record	Postseason
1.	♦2010-11	34-2	NCAA
2.	♦2008-09	26-10	NIT
3.	♦2009-10	25-9	NCAA
4.	♦2005-06	24-9	NCAA
	1966-67	24-5	NCAA DII
	1940-41	24-7	NAIA
	1938-39	24-7	NAIA

♦ - Division I era.

from home is shown by the RPI win total. The RPI gives different win values depending upon where the game is played (a home win is worth 0.6, a neutral win is worth 1.0 and a road win is worth 1.4). Only Division I games count in the RPI. The chart above shows the teams with the highest RPI win totals entering the NCAA Tournament.

► San Diego State finished Mountain West Conference play with a 14-2 record for the first time in the 12-year history of the program. The best record for a Mountain West campaign prior to this season was 13-3, which was established by the 2005-06 squad. That team won the regular-season title outright and eventually won the MWC Championship crown.

**TRENDS**

► San Diego State is one of the top defensive teams in the country. The Aztecs rank seventh in scoring defense (58.8), 12th in field-goal percentage defense (39.3), 26th in three-point field-goal percentage defense (31.4) and third in fouls committed per game (14.7). San Diego State is 23-0 this season when holding opponents to 40 percent or less from the field.

► The Aztecs rank 12th nationally in rebound margin at +6.9. The Aztecs have out rebounded 27 of 36 opponents this season and SDSU has been outrebounded only four times in its last 21 games.

► San Diego State is 17th nationally in fewest turnovers per game at 10.9. The Aztecs are 18-1 this season when owning a turnover advantage.

► San Diego State is 28-0 this season and has won 37 straight games when owning a better field-goal percentage than its opponent.

► San Diego State has won 46 consecutive games when ahead with five minutes to go in the game.

► San Diego State has won 42 consecutive games vs. teams not ranked at game time.

**Quick Personnel Notes**

For complete notes on San Diego State players, look to the players section later in this note packet. Below are a couple of quick notes on the players that make up San Diego State's starting lineup.

**Kawhi Leonard, So., F**

FoxSports.com Second-Team All-American, All-MWC First Team, All-MWC Defensive Team, All-MWC Tournament Team

► MWC All-Game Ranks: 1st in rebounding (10.6), 4th in scoring (15.6), 4th in steals (1.46), 7th in free throw percentage (76.2), 8th in field-goal percentage (44.5), 8th in minutes played (32.7).

**Most RPI Wins**

Rk.	School	RPI Wins
1.	Belmont	30.4
2.	<b>San Diego State</b>	<b>30.0</b>
3.	Kansas	28.8
4.	Brigham Young	28.2
5.	Ohio State	27.6

Entering the NCAA Tournament.

### Who's Who in College Basketball

When looking at the remaining 16 teams left in the field, San Diego State is the one program with zero NCAA Tournament tradition as it has just two tournament victories, all of which have occurred over the last week. Below is a deeper look into the amount of wins, No. 1 seeds, Final Four appearances and national championships of those left heading into the tourney's second weekend.

Seed	Team	Victories	No. 1 Seeds	Final Four Appearances	Championships
W-1.	Duke	96	11	15	4
<b>W-2.</b>	<b>San Diego State</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
W-3.	Connecticut	48	5	3	2
W-5.	Arizona	45	5	4	1
E-1.	Ohio State	47	4	10	1
E-2.	North Carolina	104	13	18	5
E-4.	Kentucky	105	10	13	7
E-11.	Marquette	36	0	2	1
SW-1.	Kansas	87	10	13	3
SW-10.	Florida State	14	0	1	0
SW-11.	VCU	7	0	0	0
SW-12.	Richmond	8	0	0	0
SE-2.	Florida	31	1	0	2
SE-3.	Brigham Young	14	0	0	0
SE-4.	Wisconsin	23	0	2	1
SE-8.	Butler	15	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 Teams</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>27</b>

- ▶ **NCAA Ranks:** 4th in double-doubles (23), 9th in rebounding (10.6), through games of March 19, according to the NCAA.
- ▶ Has scored 978 career points and is looking to become the 27th player in SDSU history to reach the 1,000-career-point total and the 10th in the Steve Fisher era.
- ▶ One of 20 finalists for the Wooden Award and a midseason Naismith Award Top-30 candidate.
- ▶ Led the Mountain West Conference in rebounding for the second consecutive year.
- ▶ Has won MWC Player of the Week honors three times this season and has six career awards.
- ▶ His 23 double-doubles this season matches the school record of 23 set by Michael Cage in 1984 (his senior season).
- ▶ Has 15 double-doubles in his last 22 games.
- ▶ Has 42 career games with 11 or more rebounds.

#### D.J. Gay, Sr., G

All-MWC First Team, All-MWC Tournament Team

- ▶ **MWC All-Game Ranks:** 2nd in assist-to-turnover ratio (2.64), 2nd in minutes played (35.2), 5th in three-point field goals made (1.92), 9th in three-point field goal percentage (35.4), 10th in assists (3.22), 16th in scoring (11.0).
- ▶ **NCAA Ranks:** 18th in assist-to-turnover ratio (2.64).
- ▶ Was one of 10 Cousy Award finalists.
- ▶ Played in all 139 games since his arrival (played in a school-record 105 SDSU wins).
- ▶ Hit his second game-winning shot of the season in the MWC semifinals at UNLV... His other came at Colorado State.
- ▶ Had a streak of 177 minutes without a turnover during conference play.
- ▶ Recorded back-to-back 20-point games for the first time of his career at New Mexico and against Air Force... He had 20 points, 6-11 3FGs vs. the Falcons and a career-high 30 points, 7-11 3FGs at UNM.

#### Malcolm Thomas, Sr., F

All-MWC Second Team, All-MWC Defensive Team

- ▶ **MWC All-Game Ranks:** 2nd in rebounding (8.1), 2nd in blocked shots (2.08).
- ▶ **NCAA Ranks:** 45th in blocked shots (2.1).
- ▶ Earned MWC Player of the Week honors four times this season.

- ▶ Had his streak of 17 consecutive games with a blocked shot snapped in the MWC semifinals at UNLV.
- ▶ Has 19 career double-doubles.
- ▶ Ranks second in SDSU history for blocked shots in a career. (127 at SDSU; 191 career total).
- ▶ Made 80 of his last 113 from FT (.708).
- ▶ Made 129 for last 235 from field (.549).

#### Billy White, Sr., F

Honorable Mention All-MWC, MWC All-Tournament Team

- ▶ **MWC All-Game Ranks:** 8th in blocked shots (0.77).
- ▶ Last six games: 14.2 points, 9.2 rebounds, 1.7 assists, 1.8 steals, .507 FG
- ▶ Started 51 straight games in which he's played (career long).
- ▶ Has 1,280 career points and was the 25th Aztec to reach 1,000 points.
- ▶ Shooting 55.6 percent from field this season.
- ▶ Put up his third straight double-double, the first time he has done so in his career, vs. Temple (16 points, career-high 13 rebounds).
- ▶ Had 21 points, 12 rebounds and five steals in the MWC Championship game against BYU.

#### Chase Tapley, So., G

- ▶ Three straight double-figure scoring games (13.3 ppg) for first time this season; matches career long.
- ▶ One turnover or less in 21 games this season.
- ▶ Has a 3FGM in 18 of his last 21 games.
- ▶ Last three games: 8-15 3FGs (53.3 pct.).
- ▶ Last 15 games: 25-of-61 3FGs (40.9 pct.).
- ▶ Made 20 of his last 21 free throws.

### Looking to Make History

On Thursday, San Diego State will look to do something no team has done in the 90-year history of the program and that is to win three consecutive games in a NCAA Tournament. It is well documented that the Aztecs picked up their first-ever Division I victories this season. But as a Division II squad, the Aztecs have won the opening two games of the tournament two times (1967, 1957), but failed in the third game. In order to find out the last time San Diego State won three straight postseason tournament

### San Diego State Record When...

#### Double-Figure Scoring

Name	10-11	Career*
Billy White	17-1	50-13
D.J. Gay	18-0	46-9
Kawhi Leonard	30-2	49-7
Malcolm Thomas	20-1	32-6
Chase Tapley	13-1	21-6
Tim Shelton	-	7-5
James Rahon	10-1	10-1
Brian Carlwell	3-0	5-1
Jamaal Franklin	1-0	1-0
Alec Williams	-	1-0

#### Scoring 20+ Points

Name	10-11	Career*
Kawhi Leonard	9-1	11-2
D.J. Gay	4-0	7-2
Malcolm Thomas	3-0	7-0
Billy White	3-0	7-1
Chase Tapley	1-0	1-0

#### Grabbing 10+ Rebounds

Name	10-11	Career*
Kawhi Leonard	21-2	34-8
Malcolm Thomas	11-1	17-2
Billy White	3-0	5-1
Tim Shelton	-	2-1
Brian Carlwell	1-0	1-0
Jamaal Franklin	1-0	1-0

### San Diego State Single-Game Leaders

#### Scoring

Name	10-11	Career*
Kawhi Leonard	16	27
Billy White	6	21
D.J. Gay	6	17
Malcolm Thomas	8	16
Chase Tapley	4	6
Tim Shelton	-	3
James Rahon	2	2
Brian Carlwell	1	1

#### Rebounding

Name	10-11	Career*
Kawhi Leonard	24	43
Malcolm Thomas	8	21
Billy White	3	21
Tim Shelton	-	10
Chase Tapley	1	2
Brian Carlwell	1	1
D.J. Gay	-	1

#### Assists

Name	10-11	Career*
D.J. Gay	20	53
Malcolm Thomas	9	19
Kawhi Leonard	11	15
Chase Tapley	7	12
Billy White	4	5
Tim Shelton	-	3
Brian Carlwell	-	1
LaBradford Franklin	1	1

\* while at San Diego State

**All-Time Series vs. Connecticut**

Series: First meeting  
 Home: 0-0, Away: 0-0, Neutral: 0-0  
 Date Location Score  
 First meeting

**San Diego State Career Statistics vs. Connecticut**

Player	G-GS	FG-A	PCT.	3FG-A	PCT.	FT-A	PCT.	REB	AVG.	A	TO	BS	ST	PTS	AVG	HI
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No San Diego State player stats vs. Connecticut

games, you'd have to go all the way back to 1941 when the Aztecs rattled off five wins in a row en route to the NAIA national championship.

**Fisher in the Postseason**

Steve Fisher is 22-9 all-time in 11 NCAA Tournament appearances. He entered the tournament ranked 10th among active head coaches with a winning percentage of .690 and is one of 11 coaches to have one at least one national championship, joining Jim Boeheim, Jim Calhoun, Billy Donovan, Tom Izzo, Mike Krzyzewski, Rick Pitino, Bill Self, Tubby Smith, Gary Williams and Roy Williams. In National Invitation Tournament games, Fisher is 11-6 all-time with the 1997 NIT title under his belt.

**Fisher in the Sweet 16**

In NCAA regional semifinal games, Fisher is a perfect 4-0 and winning by an average margin of victory of 5.8 points. The national championship head coach is making his first appearance in the Sweet 16 since 1994 when Michigan defeated Maryland to advance to the Elite Eight. That was the third of three straight appearances in the regional semifinal for Fisher and the Wolverines.

**Fisher and the Seedings**

The Aztecs' No. 2 seed is the second-highest seed by a Steve Fisher-coached team. Fisher's only No. 1 seed came in 1993, when Michigan earned top billing in the West Region. The Wolverines went on to finish runner-up in the NCAA Championship, falling to fellow No. 1 seed North Carolina, 77-71.

SDSU's No. 2 seeding is the program's best ever. In Fisher's three previous trips to the NCAA Tournament with San Diego State, the teams were seeded 13th (2002), 11th (2006) and 11th (2010).

In his seven trips to the NCAA Tournament while at Michigan, Fisher's teams were seeded third (1989), third (1990), sixth (1992), first (1993), third (1994), ninth (1995) and seventh (1996).

**Experience vs. Inexperience**

Steve Fisher is one of the most successful NCAA Tournament coaches in history. Even though San Diego State posted its first two NCAA Tournament victories in school history last weekend, there is still a huge gap between what Fisher has done in the tournament and what the Aztecs have accomplished to date. The contrast between the two is broken out below.

	Fisher	SDSU
Seasons Coached/Seasons Division I	21st	41st
NCAA Tournaments	11th	7th
NCAA Championships	1	0
NCAA Championship Game Appearances	3	0
NCAA Tournament Games	31	8
NCAA Tournament Record	22-9	2-6
First-Round Record	6-5	1-6
Second-Round Record	5-1	1-0
Regional Semifinal Record	4-0	0-0
Regional Final Record	3-1	0-0
National Semifinal Record	3-0	0-0

National Championship Game Record 1-2 0-0

**Aztecs vs. the Field**

San Diego State is 8-2 this season against teams in the field of 68 having gone 3-0 vs. the Southwest Region's No. 8 seed UNLV, 1-0 vs. the West's No. 7 seed Temple, 1-0 vs. the West's No. 15 seed Northern Colorado, 1-0 vs. the Southeast's No. 11 seed Gonzaga, 1-0 vs. the Southeast's No. 15 seed UC Santa Barbara and 1-2 vs. the Southeast's No. 3 seed Brigham Young.

**Rare Air**

The 2010-11 editions of San Diego State, Kansas and Ohio State become the 10th, 11th and 12th schools in the history of the NCAA Division I to enter the tournament with at least 32 victories and two or fewer losses.

This is the first time in the history of the bracket that three teams have met both the criteria above in the same season.

The good news is that of the previous nine schools with at least 32 wins and two or fewer losses, six have gone on to reach the Final Four. The bad news is that none have gone on to win the title. The chart on the next page takes a closer look.

Season	Team	Record	NCAA
1986	Duke	32-2	Runner-Up
1987	UNLV	33-1	Final Four
1997	Kansas	32-1	Sweet 16
1999	Duke	32-1	Runner-Up
2005	Illinois	32-1	Runner-Up
2008	Memphis	33-1	Runner-Up
	North Carolina	32-2	Final Four
2010	Kentucky	32-2	Elite Eight
	Kansas	32-2	Second Round
<b>2011</b>	<b>San Diego State</b>	<b>32-2</b>	
	Kansas	32-2	
	Ohio State	32-2	

\* All records are entering the NCAA Tournament.

**SDSU-Connecticut: The Series**

- ▶ San Diego State and Connecticut have never crossed paths in the Aztecs' 90-year history.
- ▶ In fact, Steve Fisher has never coached against Connecticut in his coaching career.
- ▶ The San Diego State women's basketball team played a home-and-home with UConn and dropped both games. The Huskies claimed an 85-53 win in 2007 in San Diego and followed it with a 99-55 decision in Storrs.

**SDSU vs. the Big East**

San Diego State is winless in 12 games vs. current members of the Big East. The last time the Aztecs met a Big East school it was in the 2006-07 postseason NIT against Syracuse. The Orange won the second-round game, 80-64, in front of a NIT record 26,752 inside the Carrier Dome.

The Aztecs are 0-3 vs. both Villanova and Marquette, 0-2 vs. Providence and DePaul, and lost their only meetings with Syracuse and Georgetown.

**Fisher vs. the Big East**

Unlike San Diego State, Steve Fisher has enjoyed a little more success vs. the Big East than his current employer.



### Staying Local

It is no secret that San Diego State is playing close to home. Below shows how close Honda Center is in relation to the San Diego State campus and the Aztecs' five players who hail from the Southern California area. Not included in this list are SDSU's two San Diego natives, Malcolm Thomas and James Rahon.

- From Alec Williams' hometown of San Juan Capistrano, Calif., to Honda Center: 28.63 miles
- From Kawhi Leonard's hometown of Riverside, Calif., to Honda Center: 35.67 miles
- From D.J. Gay's hometown of Sun Valley, Calif., to Honda Center: 46.53 miles
- From LaBradford Franklin's hometown of Temecula, Calif., to Honda Center: 60.43 miles
- From Jamaal Franklin's hometown of Phelan, Calif., to Honda Center: 69.77 miles
- From San Diego State University to Honda Center: 94.22 miles

Fisher, in his time as head coach, is 10-5 vs. the league.

Fisher's teams are 3-0 vs. Notre Dame, 2-0 vs. Marquette and Seton Hall, 1-0 vs. Cincinnati and DePaul, 1-1 vs. St. John's, 0-1 vs. Syracuse and Pittsburgh, and 0-2 vs. Providence.

In the NCAA Tournament, Fisher is 2-0 vs. the current Big East configuration. In 1989, his Michigan squad defeated Seton Hall to win the national championship. Then in 1992, the Wolverines downed Cincinnati in the national semifinal, 76-72, to advance to the title game.

### Steve Fisher Named Naismith Coach of the Year Finalist

San Diego State men's basketball head coach Steve Fisher has been named a finalist for the Naismith Coach-of-the-Year Award, the Atlanta Tipoff Club announced March 16. Fisher is one of four finalists for the award, joining Ohio State's Thad Matta, Notre Dame's Mike Brey and Brigham Young's Dave Rose.

Fisher, who was named the USBWA District IX Coach of the Year and the Mountain West Conference Co-Coach of the Year last week, has helped the Aztecs go 32-2 this season. Fisher led No. 6/5 SDSU to a 72-54 victory over Brigham Young on Saturday for its second consecutive Mountain West tournament championship. In addition, San Diego State earned a share of the regular season title. The Aztecs have been in the top 25 every week and in the top 10 of both major college basketball polls for 13 straight weeks.

### Conference Champions

San Diego State claimed its fifth and sixth Mountain West Conference championships after claiming its second MWC regular-season title after finishing league action with a 14-2 record and capturing the conference tournament crown.

The Aztecs won a share of the regular-season crown this season and claimed the 2006 title outright. At the conference tournament, SDSU has earned the league's automatic bid after winning in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2011.

This year's regular-season title is just the program's second in the past 33 seasons, which spans San Diego State's membership in both the Mountain West and Western Athletic Conferences.

### Fisher's Time of Year

It is late in the season and this is when head coach Steve Fisher's teams are known to make a run. Including conference tournaments and postseason tournaments, Fisher owns a 48-22 record in postseason play. That includes a 16-8 mark in the MWC tournament, a 10-5 record in the post-season NIT and a remarkable 22-9 record in the NCAA Tournament.

### Aztecs Inside Honda Center

San Diego State goes into Thursday's game familiar with Honda Center. When D.J. Gay, Billy White and Tim Shelton were freshmen in 2007-08 and sophomores in 2008-09, SDSU traveled north to face Saint Mary's in the Wooden Classic. In both seasons, the Aztecs were on the wrong end of score, losing 69-64 in 2007 and 67-64 in 2008.

### SDSU in the MWC

#### All Game Rankings

Scoring offense	3rd
Scoring defense	1st
Scoring margin	2nd
FT percentage	4th
FG percentage	2nd
FG percentage defense	1st
3FG percentage	5th
3FG percentage defense	1st
3FG made	6th
Rebounding offense	2nd
Rebounding defense	1st
Rebounding margin	1st
Blocked shots	2nd
Assists	6th
Steals	6th
Turnover margin	3rd
A/TO ratio	4th
Offensive rebounds	1st
Defensive rebounds	4th
Defensive rebound pct.	4th
Offensive rebound pct.	1st

#### MWC Game Rankings

Scoring offense	3rd
Scoring defense	1st
Scoring margin	2nd
FT percentage	3rd
FG percentage	6th
FG percentage defense	1st
3FG percentage	5th
3FG percentage defense	1st
3FG made	5th
Rebounding offense	1st
Rebounding defense	2nd
Rebounding margin	1st
Blocked shots	1st
Assists	7th
Steals	T-6th
Turnover margin	3rd
A/TO ratio	4th
Offensive rebounds	1st
Defensive rebounds	2nd
Defensive rebound pct.	4th
Offensive rebound pct.	1st

### West Region Tradition

SDSU and Northern Colorado were the only teams in the West Region to have never won an NCAA Tournament game entering second-round action. Ironically, those teams played last Thursday and SDSU emerged with the win. Heading into the round of 16, the three other teams in the region (Duke, Arizona, Connecticut) combine for 189 NCAA wins, 21 No. 1 seeds, 22 Final Four appearances and seven national championships. San Diego State has two wins, period.

Seed	Team	Victories	No. 1 Seeds	Final Four Appearances	Championships
1.	► Duke	96	11	15	4
2.	► San Diego State	2	0	0	0
3.	► Connecticut	48	5	3	2
4.	Texas	34	1	3	0
5.	► Arizona	45	5	4	1
6.	Cincinnati	41	1	6	2
7.	Temple	32	1	2	0
8.	Michigan	43	2	6	1
9.	Tennessee	16	0	0	0
10.	Penn State	9	0	1	0
11.	Missouri	22	1	0	0
12.	Memphis	32	2	3	0
13.	Oakland	1	0	0	0
14.	Bucknell	2	0	0	0
15.	Northern Colorado	0	0	0	0
16.	Hampton	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 Teams</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>10</b>

**SDSU Poll Position**

Week	AP	Coaches
Preseason	25 (158)	26 (73)
1; Nov. 15	25 (162)	26 (72)
2; Nov. 22	18 (567)	22 (164)
3; Nov. 29	17 (594)	19 (229)
4; Dec. 6	14 (759)	15 (315)
5; Dec. 13	11 (914)	10 (440)
6; Dec. 20	7 (1,134)	7 (564)
7; Dec. 27	7 (1,157)	7 (571)
8; Jan. 3	6 (1,198)	6 (600)
9; Jan. 10	6 (1,249)	6 (618)
10; Jan. 17	6 (1,294)	6 (633)
11; Jan. 24	4 (1,386)	4 (677)
12; Jan. 31	7 (1,218)	6 (592)
13; Feb. 7	6 (1,259)	6 (614)
14; Feb. 14	6 (1,256)	6 (623)
15; Feb. 21	6 (1,327)	4 (672; 3)
16; Feb. 28	9 (1,151)	9 (542)
17; Mar. 7	7 (1,197)	6 (592)
18; Mar. 13	--	5 (619)
18, Mar. 14	6 (1,322)	--

Number in red represents first-place votes.

**Best Records**

At 34-2, San Diego State not only has the best winning percentage in the country (.944), it has put together the best 36-game record in San Diego State and Mountain West Conference history. The Aztecs have also given Steve Fisher's his best 36-game record of his storied career.

Fisher's other best starts have resulted in good success in the NCAA Tournament.

Record after 36 Games	Postseason
<b>2010-11 San Diego State 34-2</b>	<b>NCAA No. 2 Seed</b>
1992-93 Michigan 31-5	NCAA, Runner-Up
2008-09 San Diego State 26-10	NIT semifinals

Prior to this 36-game run, Fisher's best opening mark was a 31-5 record set by his 1992-93 Michigan team. That year, Fisher guided the Wolverines to the national title game for the second consecutive season, falling in the national title game to North Carolina, 77-71.

That year, Michigan was led by members of the Fab Five, including sophomore Chris Webber (19.2 ppg, 10.1 rpg), sophomore Ray Jackson (9.0 ppg, 4.1 rpg), sophomore Juwan Howard (14.6 ppg, 7.4 rpg), sophomore Jalen Rose (15.4 ppg, 4.2 rpg) and sophomore Jimmy King (10.8 ppg, 4.4 rpg).

**Let's Stay Together**

One of the main reasons San Diego State has been able to put together its most successful run in school history is because the current coaching staff has been together for some time. Including this season, head coach Steve Fisher has been able to collectively count on assistant head coach Brian Dutcher, assistant coaches Justin Hutson and Mark Fisher, director of operations Matt Soria and director of player development David Velasquez, for four straight seasons.

The Aztecs are in the midst of their sixth straight 20-win campaign, but the last four seasons, including this one, they have won a combined 105 games heading into Thursday's tilt vs. Connecticut. The school record for most victories in a four-year period was 93, which spanned the 2007-10 campaigns.

**Win Streaks**

Below is a look at San Diego State's major active win streaks.

- ▶ 42-game streak against unranked teams.
- ▶ 31-game homecourt winning streak against unranked teams.
- ▶ 20-game road/neutral winning streak over unranked teams.
- ▶ 8-game winning streak at neutral sites.
- ▶ 6-game road winning streak.

**Emphasizing Free Throws**

At the end of the first half of conference play, Steve Fisher and the staff reemphasized areas that they felt the team needed to improve on. Number one on the list was getting to the free-throw line more frequently.

The extra attention placed on getting to the line has paid off as San Diego State shot 22 or more free throws in six of the its last eight games to close the conference campaign. Prior to the second half of the MWC season, the Aztecs shot 20 or more free throws in a game just once in the previous 12 games.

Here is a comparison on free throws made and attempted from the first conference meeting to the second conference meeting.

	1st Meet. FTM-FTA	2nd Meet. FTM-FTA
TCU	4-6	18-24
Utah	8-18	16-26
UNLV	13-17	20-22
New Mexico	20-29	21-31
Air Force	7-16	24-33
Brigham Young	9-15	11-16
Wyoming	9-15	19-24
Colorado State	8-10	18-19
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>60-96 (62.5 pct.)</b>	<b>147-195 (75.4 pct)</b>

Comparing the first and second rotation through the Mountain West Conference, the Aztecs shot 99 more free throws and made 87 more free throws in the second encounter when compared with the first go around. SDSU's free throw percentage increased by nearly 13 percent (62.5 to 75.4) in the same span.

In the conference tournament, San Diego State did not shoot more than 19 free throws in a game, but outshot two of its three opponents (Utah and UNLV) and nearly made more free throws than its opponents took (35-37). Over the three days in Las Vegas, SDSU shot 71.4 percent from the line (35-49).

In the NCAA Tournament, San Diego State has been outshot at the line, 19-17, but has made two more than its opponents, 14-12.

The Aztecs have been particularly good late in games, making 77.0 percent of their free throw attempts in the final five minutes of the last 13 games. San Diego State has also shot 40 more free throws and made 26 more than its opponents in the final five minutes.

**Wing-Spanning the Court**

San Diego State's frontline may have one of the longest wingspans in the country with two over seven feet long and another one longer than 6-10. What comes off the bench is equally impressive as both are 6-9 and longer. Below are the wingspans of the Aztec frontline.

	Wingspan
Brian Carlwell	7-1 3/8
Malcolm Thomas	7-0 1/2
Kawhi Leonard	7-0 3/8
Billy White	6-10 7/8
Mehdi Cheriet	6-9 1/2

**Leonard at Top of Mountain**

Kawhi Leonard, in not even two full seasons, ranks atop the Mountain West Conference double-doubles list in three categories and is dangerously close to taking over another. Below is where is ranks on a conference level.

Career Double-Doubles for All Games

1. Kawhi Leonard (SDSU), 2010-present	41
2. Andrew Bogut (Utah), 2003-05	40

Single-Season Double-Doubles for All Games

1. Andrew Bogut (Utah), 2004-05	26
2. Kawhi Leonard (SDSU), 2010-11	24

Career Double-Doubles in MWC Games

1. Kawhi Leonard (SDSU), 2010-present	21
2. Marcus Slaughter (SDSU), 2003-06	17

Single-Season Double-Doubles in MWC Games

1. Kawhi Leonard (SDSU), 2010-11	12
2. Jason Smith (CSU), 2006-07	10

## Quality Road Wins

With a 12-1 road record and an 20-1 mark away from home this season, it would be tough to believe that any team in the nation has a more impressive resume away from home than San Diego State.

Below is a game-by-game look at the Aztecs' road wins this season. All information is through the end of the regular season.

	<u>'10-11 Home Record*</u>
at Long Beach State	11-1
at Gonzaga	14-1
at Miami (Ohio)	12-3
at California	11-5
at TCU	8-7
at Utah	9-5
at New Mexico	13-2
at Colorado State	9-3
at UNLV	11-3
at Air Force	11-4
at Wyoming	10-6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>119-40</b>

\* - does not include a loss to San Diego State

A few notes from several of the road victories this season.

at Gonzaga (W, 79-76) - The Zags are 10-1 in their other home games this season... SDSU's win snapped Gonzaga's 12-game homecourt win streak... After the loss, Gonzaga's record in the building's lifetime was 77-5.

at California (W, 77-57) - The victory snapped Cal's 21-game homecourt win streak against non-conference teams... The Bears were 19-1 in their previous 20 home games before falling to SDSU.

at New Mexico (W, 87-77) - San Diego State snapped New Mexico's 12-game homecourt winning streak... San Diego State built an 18-point lead at one point, marking the largest deficit for a Lobo team at The Pit since Jan. 24, 2007.

at Colorado State (W, 56-54) - D.J. Gay hit the game-winning shot with 1.8 seconds left in regulation and then stole the inbounds pass as time expired.

at UNLV (W, 63-57; W, 74-72) - San Diego State twice won at a place where the rest of the nation is 6-36 against UNLV since Dec. 17, 2008... The Aztecs beat UNLV in the regular season and in the semifinals of the conference tournament, which takes place on its home floor... Since Dec. 17, 2008, the Aztecs are 5-1 against the Runnin' Rebels at Thomas & Mack Center.

at Wyoming (W, 85-58) - The Aztecs won at Arena Auditorium, a place where they have won only six times prior to this season and had not won at the venue since 2008... The Cowboys entered the game 2-0 at home under interim head coach Fred Langley.

## Beating the Best

Entering the third round of the NCAA Tournament, San Diego State owns four victories over teams that finished in first place in their respective conferences and four victories over teams that ended the regular season in second place in their league standings.

The Aztecs own victories over regular-season conference champions Northern Colorado (Big Sky), Long Beach State (Big West), Saint Mary's (West Coast Conference) and Gonzaga (West Coast), which also won its conference tournament.

SDSU also owns victories over second-place finishers Temple (Atlantic 10), Wichita State (Missouri Valley), Cal Poly (Big West) and Miami (Ohio) (MAC-East).

In addition to Gonzaga, San Diego State beat UC Santa Barbara, which won the Big West tournament.

## Frontcourt Doing Work

The San Diego State frontcourt duo of Kawhi Leonard and Malcolm Thomas has been one of the best in the nation. Leonard averages a double-double (15.6 points, 10.6 rebounds), while Thomas puts up 11.4 points and 8.1 boards.

In fact, the twosome may be the best passing frontcourt as well. Leonard ranks second on the team in assists (2.5) and Thomas is not far behind at 2.3. From the field, they are beasts inside the three-point arc as Thomas is a 55.1 percent shooter and Leonard shoots at a 47.8 percent clip.

Over their last 10 games Leonard is averaging 17.4 points, 10.5 rebounds and 2.2 assists, while Thomas is averaging 12.6 points, 8.2 boards, 2.6 assists and 1.9 blocks.

Starting forward Billy White has also played the best basketball of his career recently as well. The Las Vegas, Nev., product is coming off three straight double-doubles: 16 points, career-high 13 rebounds vs. Temple, 12 points, 13 rebounds vs. Northern Colorado and 21-points, 12 rebounds vs. No. 8/8 BYU in the MWC championship game. He has scored in double figures in a season-best six straight games for the first time since the last game of 2008-09 and his first five games of the 2009-10 campaign. Over his last six outings, he is averaging 14.2 points, 9.2 rebounds, 1.7 assists and 1.8 steals, while shooting 50.7 percent from the field.

## D.J. Does it Again

For the second time this season, D.J. Gay hit a game-winner and could not have come at a better time. With UNLV storming back in the second half and eventually taking the lead with under a minute to play, the Aztecs had their backs against the wall. A pair of Malcolm Thomas free throws knotted the score at 72 and after a major defensive stop, Gay went to work with less than 20 seconds to play. The senior guard faked driving to his right, went left and dropped a floater with 4.9 seconds to play. Earlier this season, Gay knocked down a fadeaway 19-footer along the sideline at Colorado State, which is described later in this note packet.

## Home Sweet Home

► San Diego State finished the season having won 31 consecutive home games against teams from outside the AP Top 25.

► After its victory over Colorado State, SDSU has won 19 of its last 20 games at Viejas Arena.

► Since the start of the 2005-06 campaign, San Diego State has compiled a 82-11 record at home and has lost only four times on Montezuma Mesa the last two seasons.

► Since Nov. 19, 2008, San Diego State has lost only three times at home, all of which were to Brigham Young.

► SDSU finished the non-MWC portion of the slate having won a program-record 22 straight home dates vs. non-conference foes.

► During its school-record 22-game non-conference home winning streak, San Diego State won by an average of 20.8 points (458 points total).

## Leonard Makes Final Wooden Award Cut

Kawhi Leonard, it was announced March 14, is one of 20 candidates on the final ballot for the 2010-11 John R. Wooden Award. A preseason top-50 and midseason top-30 candidate, Leonard is one of five sophomores on the list, one of four players from non-power conference and one of two from the Mountain West Conference.

Created in 1976, the John R. Wooden Award is the most

## Aztecs Break Single-Season Attendance Record

Prior to this season, SDSU sold out Viejas Arena eight times in 13 years. In 2010-11, the Aztecs have played before 13 sell-out crowds. Against Utah, San Diego State set the school single-season attendance record after playing just 12 home games. Below is where this season stacks up with other well-attended seasons on Montezuma Mesa.

### San Diego State Top-5 Season Attendance

Rk.	Year	Games	Total
1.	10-11	15	175,027
2.	08-09	18*	126,420
3.	06-07	16	125,135
4.	02-03	17	121,926
5.	09-10	15	108,412

\* - SDSU played a NIT game at USD's Jenny Craig Pavilion, which the NCAA considers a home game for the Aztecs.

### Viejas Arena Only Top-5 Season Attendance

Rk.	Year	Games	Total
1.	10-11	15	175,027
2.	06-07	16	125,135
3.	02-03	17	121,926
4.	09-10	15	108,412
5.	05-06	15	105,209

prestigious individual honor in college basketball. It is bestowed upon the nation's best player at an institution of higher education who has proven to his or her university that he or she is making progress toward graduation and maintaining a minimum cumulative 2.0 GPA.

### Fisher, Leonard Honored by USBWA

Head coach Steve Fisher was named the United States Basketball Writers Association (USBWA) District IX Coach of the Year. Sophomore forward Kawhi Leonard, meanwhile, was voted to the all-district team.

Fisher, who was named Mountain West Conference Co-Coach of the Year earlier this week, is at the helm of an Aztec basketball program that finished the regular season with the best record in the nation at 29-2. Fisher led No. 7/6 SDSU to a share of the Mountain West regular-season title and has had the Aztecs in the top 25 every week and in the top 10 of both major college basketball polls for 12 consecutive weeks, both feats no team in the district (California, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, Alaska) can claim.

Leonard, meanwhile, was named to the all-District IX first squad for the second straight season after averaging 15.2 points, 10.8 rebounds and 2.8 assists. Leonard is the third two-time honoree in school history, joining Randy Holcomb (01-02) and Brandon Heath (06-07).

Leonard was the lone San Diego State representative on the 10-player all-district team despite SDSU being the top team in the district. The Aztecs went 8-0 against teams that reside in the district this season and they currently own the third-best RPI in the nation and are the highest ranked District IX club in the both top-25 polls.

### Gay, Leonard Honored by NABC

San Diego State senior D.J. Gay and sophomore Kawhi Leonard were named to the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) All-District 17 First Team, the organization announced March 9.

The NABC recognizes the nation's best men's collegiate basketball student-athletes, which are selected and voted on by member coaches of the NABC. The 245 student-athletes, from 24 districts, are now eligible for the State Farm Coaches' Division I All-America teams.

This marks the sixth straight season in which San Diego State has had a player voted to the all-district squad and Leonard is the first two-time first-teamer since Brandon Heath was selected in both 2006 and 2007.

### Leonard on Naismith Midseason Top-30 List

Kawhi Leonard is on the Naismith Award Preseason Top-30 list, the Atlanta Tipoff Club announced Feb. 11. The forward is one of five sophomores on the prestigious list. Leonard is also a midseason candidate for the Wooden Award.

### Gay Taking Care of the Ball

Senior guard D.J. Gay entered the home game vs. New Mexico having

played 158 consecutive turnover-free minutes, while racking up 20 assists. As the first half came to a close, however, Gay turned the ball over, which stopped his streak at 177 straight minutes without a miscue. During those 177 minutes, the senior had 23 assists.

Even with his streak over, in his last 18 games, which covers 678 minutes, Gay has 59 assists to just 17 turnovers. In his last three games (118), Gay has 10 assists and one turnover. And finally, in his last 33 outings, the senior has 108 assists to only 35 turnovers. He finished the league season atop the standings with an assist-to-turnover ratio of 3.87.

### Trio of Double-Figure Rebounders

In the game vs. Utah, San Diego State had three players finish with 10 or more rebounds. Kawhi Leonard had a game-high 14 rebounds and Malcolm Thomas and Jamaal Franklin each had 10. The Aztecs had three 10-plus rebounders for the first time since Dec. 19, 2009, at Arizona State when Leonard grabbed 11 rebounds, and Thomas and Billy White both had 10.

### Jamaal Franklin Puts on a Show

Freshman Jamaal Franklin put on a show vs. Utah at Viejas Arena. Seeing significant minutes for the first time this season with Chase Tapley nursing an injured ankle, the Phelan, Calif., native recorded his first double-double of his career with 13 points and 10 rebounds in 17 minutes off the bench. Franklin was 4-for-5 from the field, including a career-best two three-point field goals, and added a personal best two assists and one steal. His double-double was a first by an Aztec freshman not named Kawhi Leonard since Billy White went for 19 points and 12 rebounds at Wyoming on Feb. 19, 2008.

### Gay Hits Game-Winner at CSU

D.J. Gay struggled with his shot all night, but hit the one that counted the most - his last one - in helping San Diego State beat Colorado State in Fort Collins. Before the game-winner left CSU with one last chance with 1.8 seconds left on the clock, Gay was 2-for-8 from the floor. His fadeaway from 19 feet along the sideline was the second time he provided the dagger against the Rams. In the 2010 MWC tournament quarterfinals, Gay hit two free throws with 23 seconds left to lift SDSU over Colorado State.

### Saving His Best for the Road

Kawhi Leonard has 10 20-point games to his credit this season and get this, the first seven this season, and nine overall, have been away from Viejas Arena. In fact, of his 13 20-point performances, 10 have been away from campus. In addition, eight of those outings have produced double-doubles, including his 22-point, 15-rebound effort at No. 9 Brigham Young. His most recent scoring outburst came in the second round of the NCAA Tournament vs. Northern Colorado where he put up 21 points and 10 rebounds.

### Aztec Connections with the Sweet 16

Team	All-Time Series			In NCAA Tourney			Connection With San Diego State
	W	L	Last	W	L	Last	
Arizona	6	20	2009	--	--	--	Aztecs won two games in Tucson this season to reach the Sweet 16
Brigham Young	23	48	2011	--	--	--	SDSU downed BYU, 72-54, in the MWC finals after losing both regular season match-ups
Butler	--	--	--	--	--	--	SDSU academic counselor Kristie Smedsrud spent two years at Butler (2001-02)
Connecticut	--	--	--	--	--	--	SDSU's Steve Fisher and UConn's Jim Calhoun each have three Final Four appearances
Duke	0	1	2001	--	--	--	Fisher's 1992 Michigan "Fab Five" team lost to Duke in the national championship game
Florida	1	1	2008	--	--	--	Both SDSU's Mehdi Cheriet and Florida's Will Yeguate are from France
Florida State	1	0	1982	--	--	--	FSU strength & conditioning coach Michael Bradley earned his bachelor's degree at SDSU in 1989
Kansas	1	1	1979	--	--	--	KU's Jeff Withey is from San Diego; Both his parents attended San Diego State
Kentucky	--	--	--	--	--	--	Both SDSU's Brian Carlwell and UK's DeAndre Liggins are from Illinois
Marquette	0	3	1975	--	--	--	Marquette played at Viejas Arena in the 2006 NCAA Tournament
North Carolina	0	2	1990	--	--	--	SDSU head coach Steve Fisher is 2-1 all-time against North Carolina
Ohio State	2	1	2003	--	--	--	Aztec women's basketball head coach Beth Burns coached at Ohio State from 1997-2002
Richmond	0	1	1991	--	--	--	As a head coach at AFA, Richmond head coach Chris Mooney went 2-1 vs. SDSU in 2004-05
VCU	0	0	--	--	--	--	SDSU asst. AD/MBB contact Mike May was the media relations director at VCU
Wisconsin	--	--	--	--	--	--	SDSU asst. head football coach Jeff Horton was the QB coach at Wisconsin from 1995-2000

## Streak Halted

Prior to its loss at No. 9 Brigham Young, San Diego State had a school-record 20-game winning streak going. Below are some notes pertaining to the run.

- ▶ The 20-game winning streak was the longest winning streak in the 90-year history of the program, snapping the 1955-56 team's 13-game unbeaten run.
- ▶ The Aztecs were one of only two undefeated teams in the nation (Ohio State) before falling at No. 9 BYU.
- ▶ San Diego State had won 11 straight road/neutral games, which was a school record. The previous record was six.
- ▶ San Diego State's 20-game winning streak earlier this season marked the longest of Steve Fisher's career, both to start a season and overall. His 1992-93 squad won 12 in a row on the way to a spot in the national title game.

## Leonard and Thomas Make History

Kawhi Leonard and Malcolm Thomas etched their names in the San Diego State record book with their performance vs. UNLV on Jan. 12. Leonard finished with a game-high 17 rebounds, while Thomas added 16. The effort marked the first time in the 90-year history of the program that two Aztecs had at least 15 rebounds in the same game.

## Three 1K Scorers is Rare

San Diego State now has three players that have scored 1,000 career points - D.J. Gay, Malcolm Thomas and Billy White.

As of March 6, only 24 Division I schools in the nation had at least three current 1,000-point scorers, but only two resided out West - San Diego State and a team it beat in the season opener, Long Beach State.

## Gay and Bob Cousy in Same Sentence

D.J. Gay was one of 10 finalists for the 2011 Bob Cousy Award, it was announced Feb. 7. The senior was on the initial watch list and has made the first two cuts, the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame announced. The Sun Valley, Calif., native, however, did not make the final cut as he was not one of the final five players selected to be eligible to win the award.

The annual award is given to college basketball's top point guard and is named after Hall of Famer and former Boston Celtics great Bob Cousy. An original list of 70-plus candidates was trimmed to 20 by a Hall of Fame appointed, nationally based committee. The current listing of 10 finalists for the 2011 Bob Cousy Award will be narrowed down to five players by March 3. The final five players in contention for the award will be presented to Mr. Cousy and the Hall of Fame's selection committee.

## White Passes SDSU Great Brandon Heath

Senior forward Billy White surpassed Aztec great Brandon Heath for career games started. The former SDSU guard and all-time leader scorer started 120 of his 125 games played and White set the new school record with his 121st career starting assignment vs. No. 8/8 BYU in the Mountain West championship game. White has improved upon that number as he has now started 123 career games.

## Gay Joins Century Club

Senior point guard D.J. Gay made his 100th career start at Utah. He became just the seventh player in school history with at least 100 starts, joining Billy White (123), Brandon Heath (120), Michael Cage (112), Leonard Allen (110), Richie Williams (109) and Chad Nelson (103). The senior currently has started 119 career games.

Gay has played in all 139 games since he stepped foot on campus.

## Running Away

This season, the Aztecs have enjoyed some dominating a scoring runs, which have helped them jump out to their strong start. San Diego State has enjoyed 41 runs of 9-0 or greater. A complete list can be found in the stats section.

## Two More Hit the 1,000 Mark

D.J. Gay and Malcolm Thomas both hit the same milestone Billy White hit earlier this year - 1,000 points for their career.

Gay entered the New Mexico game with 972 career points, while Thomas sat at 994. When the final horn sounded, Gay had 30 points and Thomas finished with six, which allowed them to hit the 1K mark. Thomas' total spans his career at both Pepperdine and San Diego State.

Gay became the 26th player in SDSU history to accomplish the feat and the 18th to do so in the Division I era (1970-71). He is also the ninth player to score 1,000 career points for Steve Fisher at San Diego State.

## Thomas Turning the Corner at the Line

Entering the season, Malcolm Thomas was a 55.1-percent free-throw shooter and had never enjoyed a season above 53 percent from the charity stripe.

That is coming to an end this season.

Thomas is shooting 65.2 percent from the line this year and is 89 for his last 130 (68.5 percent), which comes after a sub-par start where he made just 13 of his first 28 attempts (46.4 percent).

## Gay Becomes All-Time Wins Leader at SDSU

Senior D.J. Gay became the all-time wins leader at SDSU after the Aztecs' victory over Occidental on Dec. 31, 2010. The win over the Tigers gave Gay 86 wins for his career. The guard surpassed his predecessor in Richie Williams who finished his four-year career with 85 wins. The record dates back to 1975-76. To date, Gay has participated in 105 victories and became the school's all-time leader in conference wins with 40 after the Aztecs defeated Utah. He finished the conference career with 45 all-time MWC victories under his belt.

Billy White, meanwhile, is not far behind as he has contributed in 101 wins (second place).

## A Tale of Two Halves

San Diego State has been a second-half team this season to date. Even though point differential between the halves is nearly the same, +240 in the second half (1,334-1,094) compared to +235 in the first (1,259-1,024), the stats show a stark improvement in the Aztecs after coming out of the mid-game break. Below is a comparison of SDSU's production in each half.

Category	1st	2nd
Scoring	35.0	36.6
Opp. Scoring	28.4	30.1
FG percentage	.456	.473
Opp. FG percentage	.400	.388
3FG percentage	.349	.353
Opp. 3FG percentage	.333	.297

## Cutting Down on the Turnovers

After committing 81 turnovers in the first six games of the season, San Diego State has cut down on its total considerably the last 30 games where it has just 312 miscues, including a season-tying low four vs. Northern Colorado in the second round of the NCAA Tournament. In the first half dozen outings, the Aztecs averaged 13.5 turnovers compared to only 10.4 since.

## Iron Man

D.J. Gay is arguably one of the nation's iron men as he has played in every game since he has stepped foot on campus. The guard from Sun Valley, Calif., has seen action in all 139 games, while earning the starting nod 119 times. In each of his three seasons on campus, Gay has seen his minutes per game increase from 23.8 as a freshman to 26.7 as a sophomore to a team-best 34.6 minutes last year as a junior. This season, he is averaging 35.2 minutes and played 582 of a possible 640 minutes in Mountain West Conference action. Gay, who has also started 70 straight games, played the full 50 minutes in the double-overtime contest vs. Temple in the third round of the NCAA Tournament.

## Double-Double Machine

Just a sophomore, Kawhi Leonard is in second place for most double-doubles in school history (since 1975-76 season) with 40 career double-doubles. Leonard's 17 double-doubles last year were a freshman school record, which was previously owned by Michael Cage when he had 10 in 1981. This year's total of 23 is tied for the most in a single season in program history (Cage - 23; 1984). Leonard sits behind Cage's 61 career double-doubles.

## Spark Off the Bench

Sophomore James Rahon has provided a huge spark off the bench this season. The San Diego native is averaging 7.1 points, which ranks sixth on the team, and is shooting 43.0 percent from the field, including a team-best 43.3 percent from three-point distance.

This season, Rahon has reached double figures in scoring 11 times (eight points or more 15 times), has shot 50 percent or better from the field 13 times and has connected on multiple three-pointers on 14 occasions. He is also averaging 21.7 minutes.

## White Joins 1,000-Point Club

Billy White became the 25th player in school history and the 17th since 1970-71 (Division I era) to score 1,000 points for his San Diego State career on Dec. 1, 2010. The four-year starter needed seven points vs. Saint Mary's to hit the 1,000 mark and finished with nine on the night. He was awarded with a game ball in a pregame ceremony prior to the Wichita State game on Dec. 4.

## Milestone Win at California

Below are some tidbits on San Diego State's win at California.

- ▶ San Diego State snapped a 19-game road losing streak playing at teams from Power-6 conferences, dating back to an 82-70 overtime win at Northwestern on Dec. 3, 1996.
- ▶ The Aztecs snapped a 20-game road losing streak to Pac-10 teams, dating back to a 49-47 victory over at Oregon on Dec. 11, 1982.
- ▶ SDSU is now 6-51 lifetime at Pac-10 opponents and the victory snapped a 20-game losing streak in road matchups against the league. The Aztecs' five previous Pac-10 road wins occurred on Jan. 4, 1941 (California), Dec. 22, 1953 (Arizona State), Dec. 9, 1971 (Arizona), Jan. 7, 1978 (Arizona State) and, Dec. 11, 1982 (Oregon).
- ▶ San Diego State snapped a two-game losing streak at California and won for the first time in Berkeley, since a 29-28 victory on Jan. 4, 1941.
- ▶ SDSU snapped California's 21-game homecourt win streak against non-conference opponents. Overall, Cal entered the game 19-1 in its last 20 home games. The decision was the first non-conference loss at home for the Golden Bears since Dec. 22, 2007, when California fell at home to Utah.

## Reliving the Gonzaga Win

Below are tidbits on the Aztecs' victory at No. 11 Gonzaga.

- ▶ The victory snapped a 33-game road losing streak to teams ranked in the Associated Press Top 25.
- ▶ The win represented the highest-ranked team the Aztecs have ever defeated on the road.
- ▶ It was just the second road win over an AP Top 25 team in school history and the fourth road/neutral victory over a ranked opponent in school history.
- ▶ It was the fifth-highest ranked team the Aztecs have defeated in school history.
- ▶ San Diego State is 5-4 in its last nine games against teams ranked in the AP Top 25. The Aztecs were 4-41 in their previous 45 games against nationally-ranked teams prior to this stretch.
- ▶ Snapped a nine-game losing streak to non-conference AP Top 25 teams, dating back to a Dec. 8, 2001 victory over 21st-ranked Fresno State.
- ▶ It was the first time SDSU has ever defeated a top-25 team in the month of November.
- ▶ It was San Diego State's 17th victory over an AP Top-25 team, with seven of those victories coming during the Steve Fisher era.

- ▶ With the victory, San Diego State snapped Gonzaga's 12-game homecourt winning streak dating back to last season.
- ▶ San Diego State handed Gonzaga its fifth-ever loss in the McCarthy Athletic Center, dropping the Zags to 77-5 all-time in the facility. The Aztecs became the first visiting team to win at the facility since Wake Forest came away with a victory on Dec. 5, 2009.

## Aztecs Ranked for First Time in School History

San Diego State started the 2010-11 campaign ranked 25th in the preseason Associated Press Top-25 poll. The Aztecs' preseason ranking marked the first time the program has been ranked in any of the two major polls (AP, Coaches) in school history.

Entering its 90th season and its 41st at the Division I level, SDSU received 158 votes to earn its No. 25 ranking.

According to collegepollarchive.com, San Diego State became the seventh school since 1974 to make its AP poll debut in the preseason rankings. The Aztecs join UNLV (1974), Charlotte (1977), UAB (1982), Cleveland State (1987), Rhode Island (1998) and Gonzaga (2000) as the only schools to have accomplished the feat.

It marked the first time since the 2000-01 season that a team has made its debut in the AP poll. That season, Gonzaga was coming off a Sweet 16 appearance in the NCAA Tournament and the Bulldogs went on to post a 26-7 record and advanced to the 2001 NCAA Sweet 16.

## Aztecs First in Preseason MWC Media Poll

San Diego State was picked to win the Mountain West Conference in the league's preseason media poll. The Aztecs earned 261 points, including 21 of a possible 30 first-place votes. SDSU finished ahead of second-place BYU, which had 220 points and five first-place tallies.

The 261 points and 21 first-place votes are the most the Aztecs have earned in school history and the first-place prediction marks the third time the MWC media has made SDSU the preseason favorite. In 2005-06, the Aztecs were the favorite and wound up winning the regular-season and tournament championship. The other time, 2006-07, San Diego State finished in third place.

Rk.	Team	1st place votes	Total points
1.	▶ San Diego State	21	261
2.	Brigham Young	5	220
3.	New Mexico	3	214
4.	UNLV	1	203
5.	Colorado State	-	132
6.	Utah	-	105
7.	TCU	-	92
8.	Wyoming	-	88
9.	Air Force	-	35

## Leonard, Thomas Preseason All-MWC Picks

Kawhi Leonard and Malcolm Thomas were voted to the preseason all-MWC team by the conference media. The starting frontcourt entered 2010-11 as the nation's top returning rebounding duo after averaging 17.5 boards last season.

Leonard is coming off a fantastic freshman campaign in which he was named MWC freshman of the year, Mountain West tournament most valuable player and became the first freshman in the history of the league to garner all-MWC first-team accolades. Leonard, who was the only freshman in Div. I last year to guide his team to the NCAA Tournament while leading his team in scoring and rebounding, averaged 12.7 points and 9.9 rebounds. The Riverside, Calif., native also set the freshman school record for double-doubles with 17, a figure that ranked 13th among all Division I student-athletes. Leonard is the only non-senior on the five-man preseason team.

Thomas, meanwhile, enters his senior season after averaging 10.9 points and 7.6 rebounds, while shooting 54.3 percent from the floor as a junior in 2009-10. Hailing from San Diego, the 6-9 Thomas earned all-MWC second-team honors a year ago and finished the season leading the team in blocked shots, while handing out the second-most assists on the team.

# SDSU NCAA Division I Tournament Records

## Most Points

83, vs. Indiana, March 16, 2006

## Most Field Goals

35, vs. UNLV, March 14, 1975

## Most Field Goals Att.

73, vs. UCLA, March 13, 1976

## Highest FG Percentage

56.4, vs. Indiana, March 16, 2006

## Most Three-Point FG

10, vs. Indiana, March 16, 2006

## Most Three-Point FGA

22, vs. Northern Colorado, March 17, 2011

## Highest Three-Point FG Pct.

55.6, vs. Indiana, March 16, 2006

## Most Free Throws

18, vs. UNLV, March 14, 1985

## Most Free Throws Att.

30, vs. UNLV, March 14, 1985

## Highest Free Throw Pct.

100.0, vs. Temple, March 19, 2011

## Total Rebounds

53, vs. UNLV, March 14, 1975

## Assists

21, vs. UNLV, March 14, 1985

## Blocked Shots

6, vs. Temple, March 19, 2011, vs. Tennessee, March 18, 2010, vs. UNLV, March 14, 1985

## Division I Tournament History

► 7 NCAA Appearances (2-6) ► Last Appearance: 2011

► 5 NIT Appearances (5-5) ► Last Appearance: 2009

### NCAA Tournament

Year	Date	Region	Round	Site	SDSU Seed	Opp. Seed	Opp. NR	Opponent	Result	Score
1975	March 14	West	First	Tempe, Ariz. (Univ. Activity Center)	--	--	17	UNLV	L	80-90
1976	March 13	West	First	Eugene, Ore. (McArthur Court)	--	--	6	UCLA	L	64-74
1985	March 14	West	First	Salt Lake City, Utah (Special Events Center)	--	4	9	UNLV	L	80-85
2002	March 15	Midwest	First	Chicago, Ill. (United Center)	13	4	13	Illinois	L	64-93
2006	March 16	Oakland	First	Salt Lake City, Utah (Huntsman Center)	11	6	--	Indiana	L	83-87
2010	March 18	Midwest	First	Providence, R.I. (Dunkin' Donuts Center)	11	6	15/14	Tennessee	L	59-62
2011	March 17	West	Second	Tucson, Ariz. (McKale Center)	2	15	--	N. Colorado	W	68-50
	March 19	West	Third	Tucson, Ariz. (McKale Center)	2	7	--	Temple	W	71-64

### Postseason NIT

Year	Date	Round	Site	Opponent	Result	Score
1982	March 12	First	San Diego, Calif. (Sports Arena)	UC Irvine	L	69-70
2003	March 19	First	San Diego, Calif. (Cox Arena)	UC Santa Barbara	ot-W	67-62
	March 21	Second	Lubbock, Texas (United Spirit Arena)	at Texas Tech	L	48-57
2007	March 14	First	Springfield, Mo. (Hammons Student Center)	at Missouri State	W	74-70
	March 19	Second	Syracuse, N.Y. (Carrier Dome)	at Syracuse	L	64-80
2008	March 19	First	Gainesville, Fla. (O'Connell Center)	at Florida	L	49-73
2009	March 17	First	San Diego, Calif. (Cox Arena)	Weber State	W	65-49
	March 20	Second	San Diego, Calif. (Jenny Craig Pavilion)	Kansas State	W	70-52
	March 25	Quarterfinals	San Diego, Calif. (Cox Arena)	Saint Mary's	W	70-66
	March 31	Semifinals	New York, N.Y. (Madison Square Garden)	vs. Baylor	L	62-76

## Division II Tournament History

► 3 NCAA Div. II Appearances (5-3) ► Two Appearances in the Quarterfinals (1957, 1967)

Year	Date	Round	Site	Opponent	Result	Score
1957	March 2	First	San Diego, Calif.	Chapman	W	75-56
	March 9	Second	at Regis (Colo.)	Regis (Colo.)	W	81-78
	March 13	Quarterfinals	Evansville, Ind.	vs. Cal State Los Angeles	L	55-57
1967	March 10	Sub-Regional	San Diego, Calif.	Portland State	W	101-73
	March 11	Region Champ.	San Diego, Calif.	Regis (Colo.)	W	81-78
	March 15	Quarterfinals	Evansville, Indiana	vs. Illinois State	3ot-L	76-77
1968	March 8	Sub-Regional	San Diego, Calif.	UC Irvine	L	69-78
	March 9	Regional Cons.	San Diego, Calif.	UC Davis	W	79-72

## NAIA Tournament History

► 6 NAIA Appearances (15-5) ► 1941 National Champions ► 3 Championship Game Appearances

Year	Date	Round	Site	Opponent	Result	Score
1939	March 14	First	Kansas City, Mo.	Northern State (S.D.)	W	49-25
	March 15	Second	Kansas City, Mo.	East Texas State	W	41-36
	March 16	Quarterfinals	Kansas City, Mo.	Manchester	W	49-41
	March 17	Semifinals	Kansas City, Mo.	Peru State (Neb.)	W	49-29
	March 18	Finals	Kansas City, Mo.	Southwest College (Kan.)	L	31-32
	1940	March 12	First	Kansas City, Mo.	East Central State (Okla.)	W
March 13		Second	Kansas City, Mo.	Appalachian State (N.C.)	W	48-46
March 14		Quarterfinals	Kansas City, Mo.	Pittsburg State (Kan.)	W	32-30
March 15		Semifinals	Kansas City, Mo.	Delta State (Miss.)	W	30-28
March 16		Finals	Kansas City, Mo.	Tarkio College (Mo.)	L	42-52
1941		March 11	First	Kansas City, Mo.	Montana State	W
	March 12	Second	Kansas City, Mo.	Culver Stockton (Mo.)	W-ot	46-41
	March 13	Quarterfinals	Kansas City, Mo.	Texas Wesleyan	W	44-42
	March 14	Semifinals	Kansas City, Mo.	West Texas State	W	43-40
	March 15	Finals	Kansas City, Mo.	Murray State	W	36-34
1942	March 10	First	Kansas City, Mo.	Chadron State (Neb.)	W	39-36
	March 11	Second	Kansas City, Mo.	Bemidji State	L	32-41
1954	March 1	First	Pasadena, Calif.	Pasadena Nazarene	L	87-90
1956	March 13	First	Kansas City, Mo.	Alderson-Broadbus	W	77-64
	March 14	Second	Kansas City, Mo.	Gustavus Adolphus	L	60-69

75 NCAA Tournament

No. 17 UNLV 90, San Diego State 80
March 15, 1975 ♦ Tempe, Ariz.
University Activity Center ♦ Att.: NA

TEMPE, Ariz. -- San Diego State's first postseason game at the NCAA Division I level nearly produced an upset, but UNLV hung on for a 90-80 victory in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in Tempe, Ariz.

The Aztecs received a game-high 25 points from Will Connelly and a double-double from Ray Leary, who added 10 points and a game-high 11 assists. San Diego State also tallied a double-double from Steve Copp, who pulled down a game-high 17 rebounds to go along with 16 points.

Eddie Owens and Ricky Sobers led UNLV with 21 points each and Lewis Brown posted 18 points and 12 rebounds.

UNLV forced 22 turnovers and SDSU struggled from the free-throw line, converting just 10-of-25 attempts, allowing the Rebels to advance to the next round.

Table with columns for SDSU and individual players (Copp, Kovach, Connelly, Bunting, Leary, Delsman, Green, Earle, Contreras, Welshans, Rebounds, Totals) and rows for FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST, MP.

Table with columns for UNLV and individual players (Robinson, Gondrezick, Brown, Owens, Sobers, Batts, Smith, Milke, Porter, Freeman, Rebounds, Totals) and rows for FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST, MP.

Score By Periods table for UNLV vs SDSU showing 1st and 2nd quarter scores and totals.

76 NCAA Tournament

No. 6 UCLA 74, San Diego State 64
March 13, 1976 ♦ Eugene, Ore.
McArthur Court ♦ Att.: 9,100

EUGENE, Ore. -- Richard Washington, a 1976 second-team All-American, and Marques Johnson, the 1977 college player of the year, combined for 44 points as UCLA defeated San Diego State, 74-64, in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

The Aztecs gave the Bruins a game, trailing by just three points at intermission and using a 12-4 run to close within eight points with just under four minutes remaining.

SDSU's Academic All-American Steve Copp led the Aztecs with 20 points and 11 rebounds. Bob Kovach (11), Will Connelly (11) and Allen Bunting (10) also scored in double figures for the Aztecs. Washington led all scorers with 25 points for UCLA.

The Bruins used a stifling defense to hold SDSU to only 34.2 percent shooting from the field, but the Aztecs did convert 14 of 19 (73.7 percent) free throw opportunities. SDSU forced 19 UCLA turnovers, while limiting their own giveaways to only 11.

UCLA advanced to the Final Four before falling to eventual national champion Indiana, 65-51. The Bruins later defeated Rutgers in the consolation game, 106-92.

Table with columns for SDSU and individual players (Leary, Earle, Delsman, Brown, Copp, Dodd, Kovach, Connelly, Kramer, Bunting, Rebounds, Totals) and rows for FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST, MP.

Table with columns for UCLA and individual players (Townsend, Washington, Vroman, Greenwood, Drollinger, Spillane, McCarter, Olinde, Johnson, Smith, Rebounds, Totals) and rows for FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST, MP.

Score By Periods table for SDSU vs UCLA showing 1st and 2nd quarter scores and totals.

82 NIT

UC Irvine 70, San Diego State 69
March 12, 1982 ♦ San Diego, Calif.
San Diego Sports Arena ♦ Att.: 8,114

SAN DIEGO -- San Diego State's rally from an 11-point second-half deficit fell just short as UC Irvine claimed a 70-69 victory in the first round of the NIT.

The Aztecs, who never led after the opening five minutes of the game, trailed 63-55 with eight minutes remaining before an 11-4 run cut the deficit to 67-66 with 2:49 remaining. SDSU trailed 70-69 and had an opportunity to win, but Don Plummer was unable to convert on a 21-foot jumper at the buzzer.

Plummer led the Aztecs with 19 points and added seven rebounds. Keith Smith had eight points while dishing out 13 assists for San Diego State. UC Irvine was led by Kevin Magee and Randy Whieldo, who tallied 20 and 18 points, respectively.

The Anteaters shot 60.9 percent from the field while holding SDSU to only 43.7 percent shooting. However, the Aztecs countered with an aggressive defense that led to 13 steals and 19 UC Irvine turnovers. SDSU also outrebounded the Anteaters

36-30, but only managed to shoot 7 of 13 (53.8 percent) from the line.

SDSU finished the season at 20-9, which marked the first 20-win year of the Aztecs' Division I era.

Table with columns for UCI and individual players (Rainer, Mc Donald, Magee, Fuller, Whieldo, Thornton, Crossley, Rebounds, Totals) and rows for FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST, MP.

Table with columns for SDSU and individual players (Morris, Cage, Allen, Smith, Jones, Gordon, Caldwell, Plummer, Garwood, Holden, Rebounds, Totals) and rows for FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST, MP.

Score By Periods table for SDSU vs UCI showing 1st and 2nd quarter scores and totals.

85 NCAA Tournament

No. 9 UNLV 85, San Diego State 80
March 14, 1985 ♦ Salt Lake City, Utah
Special Events Center ♦ Att.: 7,351

SALT LAKE CITY -- SDSU made a late run at No. 9 UNLV but did not have enough firepower to overcome a 10-point halftime deficit as the Rebels earned an 85-80 victory in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

The Aztecs trailed by as many as 13 in the first half, but tied the game at 56 with under 10 minutes remaining. UNLV rebuilt the lead but SDSU did not give in to the more athletic Rebels as it cut the deficit to three, when Anthony Watson hit a jumper with 1:02 left. The Aztecs were forced to foul down the stretch and UNLV knocked down the free throws to secure the victory.

Leonard Allen poured in a game-high 23 points for SDSU and Anthony Watson scored 19. Forwards Michael Kennedy and John Martens also cracked double-figures as they added 11 points apiece.

The Rebels were led by Armon Gilliam who posted 21 points and 10 rebounds. Ritchie Adams, the Rebels' leading scorer on the season, was saddled with foul trouble from the start of the game and finished with 10 points in only 23 minutes of action.

Mistakes ended up costing SDSU as it committed 18 turnovers and missed 12 free throws. SDSU shot 55.4% from the field and held UNLV to 47.8% shooting and outrebounded the Rebels 39-34.

SDSU closed the season at 23-8, its best NCAA Division I record in the history of the program.

Table with columns for SDSU and individual players (Kennedy, Martens, Allen, Watson) and rows for FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST, MP.



Table with player names (Dorsey, Konek, Owens, Ross, Murray) and statistics (FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST MP). Includes a Totals row.

Table with player names (James, Gilliam, Adams, Jones, Banks, Robinson, Catchings, Graham, Hudson) and statistics (FG, FT, REB, PF, TP, A TO, B ST MP). Includes a Totals row.

Score By Periods table showing scores for San Diego State, UNLV, and Totals across four periods.

Officials: Leonard Wertz, Carol Kite, Charles Tanner.

'02 NCAA Tournament

No. 13 Illinois 93, San Diego State 64
March 15, 2002 ♦ Chicago, Ill.
United Center ♦ Att.: 20,850

CHICAGO -- In its first NCAA Tournament appearance since 1985, San Diego State was defeated by a balanced Illinois attack, falling to the Fighting Illini, 93-64, in front of 20,850 fans at the United Center.

Senior Randy Holcomb, SDSU's leading scorer during the year, was held to under 10 points for only the third time that season. He was limited to nine points in 29 minutes of play in his last game as an Aztec.

Al Faux, also playing in his last game, was the game's leading scorer with 27. Eighteen of his 27 came off of a 6-of-9 shooting performance from beyond the arc.

The Aztecs were down by 15 points at the half and never came closer than 13 the rest of the game. They were down by as many as 37 with 9:03 remaining.

Frank Williams paced the Illini with 25 points. Four of Illinois' five starters scored in double-digits.

UI outscored SDSU 15-2 on fast break points, and shot 58.6 percent to the Aztecs' 39 percent in a game that was controlled by Illinois from start to finish.

With the loss, the Aztecs ended their season in which they went 21-12 and won the Mountain West Conference Tournament Championship.

Table with player names (Holcomb, Bland, Mackell, Moore, Faux, Smith, Walton, Kovacic, Wardrop, Epps, Sanders) and statistics (MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP). Includes a Totals row.

Table with player names (Cook) and statistics (MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP).

Table with player names (Bradford, Archibald, Head, Williams, Johnson, Ferguson, Harrington, Howard, Krupalija, Powell, Smith) and statistics (MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP). Includes a Totals row.

Halftime: Illinois 40, SDSU 25. FG %: Illinois 58.6, SDSU 39.0. 3FG%: Illinois 52.0, SDSU 38.9. FT%: SDSU 68.8, Illinois 63.2. Officials: Edwin Edsall, Melanie Davis, Joe Lindsay. Technicals: None.

'03 NIT

San Diego State 67, UC Santa Barbara 62 (ot)
March 19, 2003 ♦ San Diego, Calif.
Cox Arena at Aztec Bowl ♦ Att.: 5,390

SAN DIEGO -- SDSU needed overtime to win its first Division I postseason game, claiming a 67-62 NIT first-round victory over UC Santa Barbara.

Tony Bland, who became the third Aztec player to reach 1,000 points in just two seasons, sent the game into extra time by going the length of the floor to hit a bank shot with 1.9 seconds left. Then with 1:15 left in overtime, Tommy Johnson put SDSU ahead for good at 63-60 with a 3-pointer as the Aztecs closed the game with a 13-2 run.

In its sixth postseason appearance in 33 years at the Division I level, the Aztecs overcame their largest halftime deficit of the season (32-22) snapping a three-game losing streak, limiting UCSB to just 62 points and 42.6 percent shooting.

After a dunk by Evan Burns with 5:58 left in the first half, UCSB closed out the opening period with a 14-1 run to take a 10-point lead into the half. The Gauchos scored the first basket of the second half before Bland jumpstarted the Aztecs with a free throw and layup to start a 10-0 run.

The game was tied at 50 with five minutes left and both teams buckled down defensively for the rest of regulation.

The Gauchos scored the first six points of overtime before SDSU's game-ending run, which included six straight Mike Mackell points to tie the game at 60 and set up Johnson's heroics.

Bland had a team-high 17 points, while Burns scored 12 points, and Johnson finished with 10.

Table with player names (Hull, Cook, Jones, Atako, Fullove, Brown, Davis, Ward, Whitehead) and statistics (MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP). Includes a Totals row.

Table with player names (Burns, Sanders, Mackell, Moore, Bland) and statistics (MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP).

Table with player names (Johnson, Sir, Sharper, Manker) and statistics (MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP). Includes a Totals row.

Halftime: UCSB 32, SDSU 22. FG %: SDSU 44.4, UCSB 42.6. 3FG%: SDSU 35.3, UCSB 22.2. FT%: SDSU 80.0, UCSB 71.4. Officials: Tom Wood, Don McAllister, Mike Reed. Technicals: None.

'03 NIT

Texas Tech 57, San Diego State 48
March 21, 2003 ♦ Lubbock, Texas
United Spirit Arena ♦ Att.: 7,848

LUBBOCK, Texas -- Robert Tomaszek scored 14 points as Texas Tech beat San Diego State 57-48 in the second round of NIT.

Texas Tech (20-12) led by 14 points in the first half but San Diego State trailed by just one, 46-45, with 6:41 remaining. The Aztecs (16-14) had a chance to take the lead but Tony Bland missed a layup with 6:14 left after he stole the ball from Kasib Powell and took it the length of the court.

San Diego then went scoreless for nearly five minutes before Evan Burns hit a 3-pointer from the right corner with 1:47 remaining in the game.

Powell scored 12 points, and Will Chavis and Andre Emmett - the Big 12's leading scorer - added nine each for Tech.

Deandre Moore scored 11 points and Mike Mackell added 10 to lead the Aztecs.

San Diego State took an early 12-9 lead before Tech went on a 17-0 run, during which the Aztecs missed 12 straight shots, to lead 26-12 with 6:05 left in the half.

Table with player names (Burns, Sanders, Mackell, Moore, Bland, Johnson, Sir, Sharper, Davis, Manker, Wardrop) and statistics (MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP). Includes a Totals row.

Table with player names (Emmett, Powell, Tomaszek, Doudney, Marshall, Chavis, Ross, Washington) and statistics (MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP). Includes a Totals row.

Halftime: Texas Tech 33, SDSU 21. FG %: Texas Tech 40.8, SDSU 31.5. 3FG%: SDSU 33.3, Texas Tech 16.7. FT%: Texas Tech 57.1, SDSU 53.8. Officials: Kelly Self, Larry Spaulding, Shawn Lehing. Technicals: None.











# Steve Fisher

## National Coach of the Year Candidate

- ▶ Mountain West Conference Co-Coach of the Year.
- ▶ USBWA District IX Coach of the Year.
- ▶ One of four finalists for the Naismith Coach of the Year Award.
- ▶ Has guided San Diego State to a 34-2 record, which is the best 36-game record in the 90-year history of the program.
- ▶ San Diego State owns the best winning percentage (.944) in the country entering the round of 16 of the NCAA Tournament.
- ▶ The 34 victories are the most in the nation entering the NCAA Tournament's round of 16 and in school history.
- ▶ In leading the Aztecs to a 20-0 record earlier this season, San Diego State was one of two undefeated teams left in NCAA Division I (Ohio State - 21-0).
- ▶ Led San Diego State to the second-longest active winning streak in the nation (20) earlier this season.
- ▶ Led San Diego State to its first national ranking this season, opening at No. 25 in the preseason Associated Press Top-25 poll.
- ▶ The Aztecs have been ranked in the Associated Press Top 25 every week this season, including a season-high ranking of No. 4 in the Jan. 24 poll.
- ▶ Has already coached San Diego State to its school-record sixth consecutive 20-win season.
- ▶ Has guided San Diego State to 20 road/neutral wins this season, which is the most among top-10 squads.
- ▶ Of the Aztecs' 20 road/neutral wins, 12 have been true road games.
- ▶ Coached San Diego State to a 14-2 mark in the Mountain West Conference, which is the fourth-best RPI conference according to CollegeRPI.com.
- ▶ Guided SDSU to a perfect 5-0 record in conference play for the first time since 1966-67. The Aztecs' 14-2 record in league is their best MWC mark in the 12-year history of the conference.

# Kawhi Leonard

## All-America Candidate

- ▶ Team leader in scoring, rebounding and steals for 34-2 San Diego State.
- ▶ Is a 2010-11 midseason top-30 Naismith Award candidate.
- ▶ Is a 2010-11 final-20 candidate for the Wooden Award.
- ▶ Mountain West Conference first-team selection, all-defensive team member and all-tournament choice.
- ▶ NABC and USWBA All-District pick, and FOXSports.com second-team All-American.
- ▶ Ranks fourth in NCAA Division I with 23 double-doubles and ninth in rebounding (10.6) through games of March 20.
- ▶ Is averaging 15.6 points and 10.6 rebounds overall and finished MWC play by averaging 14.8 points and 11.9 rebounds.
- ▶ Leads the Mountain West Conference in rebounding, offensive rebounding and defensive rebounding. Ranks fourth in scoring, fourth in steals, seventh in free-throw percentage, eighth in minutes played and eighth in field-goal percentage.
- ▶ Leads San Diego State in scoring, rebounding and steals, ranks second in assists, in minutes played and fourth in blocked shots.
- ▶ Has 23 double-doubles this season, which is the most on the team and ties Michael Cage's single-season record. Leonard's 40 career double-doubles are the second most in school history. Michael Cage owns the school record with 61.
- ▶ Recorded 12 double-doubles in Mountain West action, which established new a league record.
- ▶ Has 10 20-point scoring performances this year with nine coming away from home (4 road, 5 neutral). Had a season-high 23 vs. San Francisco in Las Vegas, Nev., and vs. Green Bay in Oxford, Ohio.
- ▶ Along with Malcolm Thomas, the duo is one of the best rebounding twosomes in NCAA Division I, collecting an average of 18.7 rebounds per game (Leonard - 10.6, Thomas - 8.1).
- ▶ Has scored in double figures in 32 of 35 games this season and has 23 double-digit rebounding efforts.
- ▶ Has led the team in rebounding 24 times this season, 16 times in scoring and 11 times in assists.
- ▶ Two-time MWC Player of the Week and CBE Classic Oxford Subregional Most Valuable Player.



# D.J. Gay

## All-MWC First Team

▶ "I've said repeatedly that D.J. Gay is our most important player and I somewhat quantified it and probably made him mad by saying he is not our best player but he is our most important player. ... He plays with no fear, no agenda and couldn't care less if he shoots it." - San Diego State Head Coach Steve Fisher

▶ Team captain and team leader in assists, three-point field goals and minutes played for the 34-2 San Diego State Aztecs.

▶ All-Mountain West Conference first-team pick and a NABC first-team all-District 17 honoree.

▶ Ranks 18th nationally in assist-to-turnover ratio (2.64) through games of March 20.

▶ Is averaging 11.0 points, 2.1 rebounds and 3.2 assists overall. Finished Mountain West Conference action by averaging 11.6 points, 2.2 rebounds and 3.6 assists.

▶ Produced an assist-to-turnover ratio of 3.87 in Mountain West games, which was tops in the league.

▶ Mountain West Conference rankings (league games only): first in assist-to-turnover average, third in minutes, fourth in three-point field goals made, fourth in steals, seventh in assists, 10th in three-point field-goal percentage and 16th in scoring.

▶ Has played and started all 36 games this season and played 582 of a possible 640 minutes in Mountain West action.

▶ Has 18 double-figure scoring performances this season.

▶ Has four 20-point scoring performances this season, the second most on the team. Ran off two straight 20-point games for the first time of his career (30 at New Mexico, 20 vs. Air Force) earlier this season.

▶ Has led the team in assists 20 times this season and in scoring six times.

▶ Has 13 turnover-free outings and 21 games with one turnover or less.

▶ Knocked down multiple three-point field goals 17 times in 2010-11.

▶ Logged 37 or more minutes 19 times this season and has played 39 or more minutes 11 times.

▶ MWC Co-Player of the Week on Feb. 14.





## 2010-11 San Diego State Alphabetical Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Exp.	Entering Regional Semis			Hometown (High School/Previous School)
							PPG	RPG	APG	
5	Brian Carlwell	C	6-11	300	Sr.	1L	3.8	2.7	0.2	Maywood, Ill. (Proviso East High/Univ. of Illinois)
42	Mehdi Cheriet	F	6-9	225	Sr.	1L	1.8	1.0	0.2	Tarare, France (Arizona Western College)
21	Jamaal Franklin	G	6-5	185	Fr.	HS	3.0	1.9	0.4	Phelan, Calif. (Westwind Prep International (Ariz.) High)
3	LaBradford Franklin	G	6-2	170	Fr.	HS	2.1	0.9	1.4	Temecula, Calif. (Great Oak High)
23	D.J. Gay	G	6-0	170	Sr.	3L	11.0	2.1	3.2	Sun Valley, Calif. (Poly High)
15	Kawhi Leonard	F	6-7	225	So.	1L	15.6	10.6	2.5	Riverside, Calif. (King High)
11	James Rahon	G	6-5	205	So.	TR	7.1	1.6	0.8	San Diego, Calif. (Santa Clara Univ.)
10	Tim Shelton	F	6-7	245	Jr.	2L	1.7	1.6	0.4	Fresno, Calif. (Clovis West High)
22	Chase Tapley	G	6-2	200	So.	1L	8.7	2.4	1.9	Sacramento, Calif. (Sacramento High)
4	Malcolm Thomas	F	6-9	220	Sr.	1L	11.4	8.1	2.3	San Diego, Calif. (Crawford High/San Diego City College)
32	Billy White	F	6-8	235	Sr.	3L	10.1	4.4	1.6	Las Vegas, Nev. (Green Valley High)
0	Alec Williams	F	6-6	245	So.	1L	2.1	1.4	0.0	San Juan Capistrano, Calif. (J Serra Catholic High)

## 2010-11 San Diego State Numerical Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Exp.	Entering Regional Semis			Hometown (High School/Previous School)
							PPG	RPG	APG	
0	Alec Williams	F	6-6	245	So.	1L	2.1	1.4	0.0	San Juan Capistrano, Calif. (J Serra Catholic High)
3	LaBradford Franklin	G	6-2	170	Fr.	HS	2.1	0.9	1.4	Temecula, Calif. (Great Oak High)
4	Malcolm Thomas	F	6-9	220	Sr.	1L	11.4	8.1	2.3	San Diego, Calif. (Crawford High/San Diego City College)
5	Brian Carlwell	C	6-11	300	Sr.	1L	3.8	2.7	0.2	Maywood, Ill. (Proviso East High/Univ. of Illinois)
10	Tim Shelton	F	6-7	245	Jr.	2L	1.7	1.6	0.4	Fresno, Calif. (Clovis West High)
11	James Rahon	G	6-5	205	So.	TR	7.1	1.6	0.8	San Diego, Calif. (Santa Clara Univ.)
15	Kawhi Leonard	F	6-7	225	So.	1L	15.6	10.6	2.5	Riverside, Calif. (King High)
21	Jamaal Franklin	G	6-5	185	Fr.	HS	3.0	1.9	0.4	Phelan, Calif. (Westwind Prep International (Ariz.) High)
22	Chase Tapley	G	6-2	200	So.	1L	8.7	2.4	1.9	Sacramento, Calif. (Sacramento High)
23	D.J. Gay	G	6-0	170	Sr.	3L	11.0	2.1	3.2	Sun Valley, Calif. (Poly High)
32	Billy White	F	6-8	235	Sr.	3L	10.1	4.4	1.6	Las Vegas, Nev. (Green Valley High)
42	Mehdi Cheriet	F	6-9	225	Sr.	1L	1.8	1.0	0.2	Tarare, France (Arizona Western College)

<b>Head Coach:</b>	Steve Fisher (Illinois State, 1967)
<b>Assistant Head Coach:</b>	Brian Dutcher (Minnesota, 1982)
<b>Assistant Coaches:</b>	Justin Hutson (CS Bakersfield, 1994), Mark Fisher (Michigan, 2001)
<b>Director of Operations:</b>	Matt Soria (San Diego State, 2002)
<b>Director of Player Development:</b>	David Velasquez (San Diego State, 2007)

## Eligible in 2011-12 Season

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Exp.	Most Recent Div. I Season			Hometown (High School/Previous School)
							PPG	RPG	APG	
2	Xavier Thames	G	6-3	185	So.	TR	4.6	1.5	1.2	Sacramento, Calif. (Pleasant Grove High/Washington State)

► Pronunciations	By Class	Sophomores (4)	► By Position	Forwards (6)
Mehdi Cheriet Meh-DEE Shell-yet	<b>Seniors (5)</b> Brian Carlwell, Mehdi Cheriet, D.J. Gay, Malcolm Thomas, Billy White	Kawhi Leonard, James Rahon, Chase Tapley, Alec Williams	<b>Guards (5)</b> Jamaal Franklin, LaBradford Franklin, D.J. Gay, James Rahon, Chase Tapley	Mehdi Cheriet, Kawhi Leonard, Tim Shelton, Malcolm Thomas, Billy White, Alec Williams
<b>Kawhi Leonard</b> KUH-why Leonard	<b>Juniors (1)</b> Tim Shelton	<b>Freshmen (2)</b> Jamaal Franklin, LaBradford Franklin		<b>Centers (1)</b> Brian Carlwell
<b>Chase Tapley</b> Chase TAP-lee				
<b>James Rahon</b> James RAY-hawn				

# SDSU Broadcast Roster



**# 0**  
**ALEC WILLIAMS**

Forward  
6-6, 245, Sophomore-1L  
San Juan Capistrano, Calif.  
JSerra High

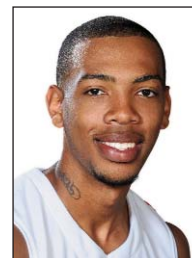
PPG: 2.1 RPG: 1.4 APG: 0.0  
FG%: 38.1 3FG: 20.0 FT%: 80.0



**# 3**  
**LABRADFORD FRANKLIN**

Guard  
6-2, 170, Freshman-HS  
Temecula, Calif.  
Great Oak High

PPG: 2.1 RPG: 0.9 APG: 1.4  
FG%: 40.7 3FG: 20.0 FT%: 80.0



**# 4**  
**MALCOLM THOMAS**

Forward  
6-9, 220, Senior-1L  
San Diego, Calif.  
San Diego City College

PPG: 11.4 RPG: 8.1 APG: 2.3  
FG%: 53.5 3FG: 16.7 FT%: 65.2



**# 5**  
**BRIAN CARLWELL**

Center  
6-11, 300, Senior-1L  
Maywood, Ill.  
Illinois

PPG: 3.8 RPG: 2.7 APG: 0.2  
FG%: 52.0 3FG: 33.3 FT%: 62.2



**# 10**  
**TIM SHELTON**

Forward  
6-7, 245, Junior-2L  
Fresno, Calif.  
Clovis West High

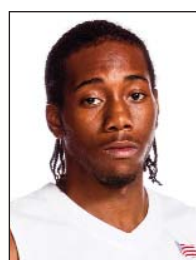
PPG: 1.7 RPG: 1.6 APG: 0.4  
FG%: 37.5 3FG: 23.5 FT%: 45.5



**# 11**  
**JAMES RAHON**

Guard  
6-5, 205, Sophomore-TR  
San Diego, Calif.  
Santa Clara

PPG: 7.1 RPG: 1.6 APG: 0.8  
FG%: 43.0 3FG: 43.3 FT%: 69.2



**# 15**  
**KAWHI LEONARD**

Forward  
6-7, 225, Sophomore-1L  
Riverside, Calif.  
King High

PPG: 15.6 RPG: 10.6 APG: 2.5  
FG%: 44.5 3FG: 29.3 FT%: 76.2



**# 21**  
**JAMAAL FRANKLIN**

Guard  
6-5, 185, Freshman-HS  
Phelan, Calif.  
Westwind Prep  
International

PPG: 3.0 RPG: 1.9 APG: 0.4  
FG%: 48.9 3FG: 33.3 FT%: 52.9



**# 22**  
**CHASE TAPLEY**

Guard  
6-2, 200, Sophomore-1L  
Sacramento, Calif.  
Sacramento High

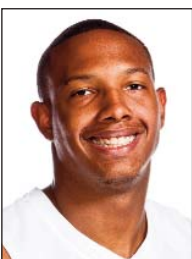
PPG: 8.7 RPG: 2.4 APG: 1.9  
FG%: 49.8 3FG: 39.6 FT%: 82.8



**# 23**  
**D.J. GAY**

Guard  
6-0, 170, Senior-3L  
Sun Valley, Calif.  
Poly High

PPG: 11.0 RPG: 2.1 APG: 3.2  
FG%: 37.5 3FG: 35.4 FT%: 68.5



**# 32**  
**BILLY WHITE**

Forward  
6-8, 235, Senior-3L  
Las Vegas, Nev.  
Green Valley High

PPG: 10.1 RPG: 4.4 APG: 1.6  
FG%: 55.6 3FG: 34.6 FT%: 74.4



**# 42**  
**MENDI CHERIET**

Forward  
6-9, 225, Senior-1L  
Tarare, France  
Arizona Western College

PPG: 1.8 RPG: 1.0 APG: 0.2  
FG%: 38.9 3FG: 15.8 FT%: 87.5



**Head Coach**  
**STEVE FISHER**

- – 20th full season as head coach • 416-233
- – 12th year at San Diego State • 232-151
- – 1989 NCAA champion
- – 3 NCAA Championship game appearances
- – 11 NCAA Tournament appearances
- – 17 postseason appearances
- – 2011 MWC Co-Coach of the Year, USBWA District IX Coach of the Year

## San Diego State Coaches and Staff

Brian Dutcher, assistant head coach  
Justin Hutson, assistant coach  
Mark Fisher, assistant coach  
Matt Soria, director of basketball operations  
David Velasquez, dir. of player development  
David Smith, athletic trainer



# Steve Fisher

20th-Full Season • 12th Season at SDSU • Illinois State, 1967

Steve Fisher has guided the Aztec basketball program to unparalleled heights. In 12 seasons, he has taken a program that regularly missed out on the conference postseason tournament, to one which has become of the best programs on the West Coast and has the Aztecs routinely mentioned among the elite teams in the country.

The best news for SDSU fans is that the school exercised its contract option on Fisher prior to the 2010-11 season, which keeps the coach on Montezuma Mesa until 2012-13.

When Fisher arrived on the scene in March of 1999, he found a basketball program that wasn't good enough to be called average. The Aztecs had suffered through 13 losing seasons in 14 years. Members of the school's last NCAA team were in the early stages of middle age. The expectations were set. The Aztecs were expected to lose. The year before Fisher's arrival on campus, San Diego State won just four games.

Now those days are a distant memory. Fisher guided San Diego State to the NCAA Tournament in 2002, the postseason NIT in 2003, the 2006 NCAA Tournament, the 2007-09 NIT, including the NIT semifinals in 2009, and the 2010 NCAA Tournament. In addition, the Aztecs have one of their deepest teams ever, which will keep SDSU competitive this season and seasons ahead.

On March 26, 1999, San Diego State announced its arrival on the basketball scene in the form of a news conference to introduce its new coach, Steve Fisher. Fresh from a stint with the Sacramento Kings and with three appearances in the Final Four and a national championship in his pocket, he rolled up his sleeves and went to work. And work was needed. It looked to be a daunting challenge and yet the man with one of the highest winning percentages in NCAA Tournament history had no reservations.

No head-coaching career, at any level, started quicker than that of Steve Fisher. Six games into his head-coaching career he was undefeated and sporting a national championship ring. And the success didn't stop with the national title.

Fisher's eight-plus seasons at Michigan produced a 184-82 (.692) record, nine postseason tournament berths and three

trips to the NCAA championship game, including the magical run to the 1989 national title.

Under Fisher, the Wolverines also claimed an NIT championship, won at least 20 games four times and finished among the top three in the powerful Big Ten Conference five times. In 1995, Michigan set a league record by holding opponents to just 39.4 percent shooting from the floor.

Fisher and Co., raised the bar even higher in the postseason. His seven NCAA Tournament teams at Michigan combined for a 20-6 record, which put him fourth among active coaches and ninth in NCAA history with a winning percentage of .769 in the national bracket after his stint in Ann Arbor. Only 13 coaches have taken more teams to the Final Four, including just five that are still active. He is one of three coaches to take three squads to the Final Four in the first five years of a head-coaching career, and one of just six coaches to lead a team to a NIT title as well as the NCAA.

His accomplishments may be even greater at San Diego State. In 2001-02 he led the Aztecs to the postseason for the first time since 1985 and for just the fourth time ever. The 21 wins were second most for the school as a Division I program and the most since 1985. The fact that those numbers came after just three seasons signifies what is one of the great recent turnarounds in college basketball.

He followed that up with a third consecutive season with a .500 or better record in 2002-03 and led SDSU back to the postseason for the second consecutive season for only the second time in the school's Division I history. In addition, SDSU claimed its first Division I postseason victory with a win in the NIT.

In 2006-07, he led SDSU to the MWC regular season and tournament crowns and a berth in the NCAA Tournament. That team finished with a Division I then-school-record 24 wins. And the last four seasons, Fisher has led the Aztecs to four additional 20-win seasons and postseason appearances, including a school-record 26 wins and an NIT semifinal berth in 2009 and a MWC tourney crown and a spot in the NAAs in 2010, and he doesn't look like he is stopping anytime soon.

## Record Breakdown

	Career
Home	233-69
Away	110-134
Neutral	73-30

### By Month

November	57-20
December	112-41
January	91-65
February	77-63
March	75-40
April	4-2

### Games Decided By/In

1-Point Games	19-8
2 Points	21-16
3 Points or Less	80-55
Overtime	29-16

## ► Steve Fisher Year-By-Year

Year	School	W	L	Pct.	Conference			Postseason/Honors
					W	L	Pct.	
1989	Michigan	6	0	1.000	-	-	-	NCAA Champions
1989-90	Michigan	23	8	.742	12	6	.667	NCAA Second Round
1990-91	Michigan	14	15	.483	7	11	.389	NIT First Round
1991-92	Michigan	25	9	.735	11	7	.611	NCAA Runner-Up, <i>Basketball Times</i> Coach of the Year
1992-93	Michigan	31	5	.861	15	3	.833	NCAA Runner-Up
1993-94	Michigan	24	8	.750	13	5	.722	NCAA Regional Finalist
1994-95	Michigan	17	14	.548	11	7	.611	NCAA First Round
1995-96	Michigan	20	12	.625	10	8	.556	NCAA First Round
1996-97	Michigan	24	11	.686	9	9	.500	NIT Champions
<b>Eight Full Seasons at UM</b>		<b>184</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>.692</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>.611</b>	<b>7 NCAA Tournaments, 9 Postseason Appearances</b>
Year	School	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.	Postseason/Honors
1999-00	San Diego State	5	23	.179	0	14	.000	
2000-01	San Diego State	14	14	.500	4	10	.286	8th-most improved team in the country (Sagarin Ratings)
2001-02	San Diego State	21	12	.636	7	7	.500	NCAA First Round; Aztecs' first NCAA trip since 1985
2002-03	San Diego State	16	14	.552	6	8	.429	NIT Second Round; Aztecs reach postseason in consecutive yrs
2003-04	San Diego State	14	16	.483	5	9	.357	Two players that earned all-league honors return in 04-05
2004-05	San Diego State	11	18	.379	4	10	.286	Young Aztecs drop seven gms. by four pts. or less or OT
2005-06	San Diego State	24	9	.727	13	3	.813	MWC regular season and tournament champs.; NCAA berth
2006-07	San Diego State	22	11	.667	10	6	.625	NIT Second Round; First road win in D-I postseason tourney
2007-08	San Diego State	20	13	.606	9	7	.563	NIT First Round; Third straight 20-win season
2008-09	San Diego State	26	10	.722	11	5	.688	NIT Semifinals; Fourth straight 20-win year; SDSU-record 26 wins
2009-10	San Diego State	25	9	.735	11	5	.667	NCAA First Round, MWC tournament champions
2010-11	San Diego State	34	2	.944	14	2	.875	MWC reg.-season co-champs, tourney champs, MWC COY
<b>12 Seasons at SDSU</b>		<b>232</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>.606</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>.522</b>	<b>4 NCAA Tournaments; 8 Postseason Appearances</b>
		W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.	Postseason/Honors
<b>20th-Full Season Career</b>		<b>416</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>.641</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>.562</b>	<b>11 NCAA Tournaments, 17 Postseason Appearances</b>

**Season/Career Highs**

**Points**  
 Season 9 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 11 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)

**Rebounds**  
 Season 4 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 4 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 4 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)  
 Career 7 vs. UCSD (11-14-09)

**Assists**  
 Season  
 Career 1 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)  
 1 vs. Santa Clara (11-16-09)  
 1 vs. UCSD (11-14-09)

**Field Goals**  
 Season 3 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 3 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 3 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)  
 3 vs. UCSD (11-14-09)

**Field Goals Attempted**  
 Season 6 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 6 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)

**Three-Point Field Goals**  
 Season 1 vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)  
 Career 1 vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)  
 1 at Air Force (3-6-10)  
 1 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)

**Three-Point FG Attempted**  
 Season 3 vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)  
 Career 3 vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)

**Free Throws**  
 Season 3 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 4 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)

**Free Throws Attempted**  
 Season 3 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 4 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)

**Steals**  
 Season  
 Career --

**Blocked Shots**  
 Season 1 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 1 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 1 at Air Force (3-6-10)

**Minutes Played**  
 Season 14 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 21 vs. UCSD (11-14-09)



# 0 • Alec Williams

**Forward • 6-6 • 245 • Sophomore - 1L**  
**San Juan Capistrano, Calif. (JSerra Catholic High)**

**Season Highlights**

- ▶ Hit his only field-goal attempt at Wyoming (3-1-11) and finished with two points.
- ▶ Picked up a season-high four rebounds and scoring three points in seven minutes vs. Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ In his first extended minutes of the season (14) vs. Occidental (12-31-10), he responded with season-high figures in points (9), rebounds (4) and blocks (1).
- ▶ Saw first game action of the season vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10) and finished with two points and four rebounds. It was his first appearance since March 6, 2010, at Air Force.
- ▶ Played at California (12-8-10) in the second half.
- ▶ Saw action vs. San Diego (12-11-10) and finished with four minutes.
- ▶ Hit his first three-pointer of the season and finished with three points and one rebound in three minutes vs. San Francisco (12-21-10).

**Career Highlights**

- ▶ Played in 12 games as a freshman in 2009-10.
- ▶ Scored in 10 career games and grabbed at least one rebound in eight outings.
- ▶ Has committed only four turnovers in 136 career minutes.

**2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics**

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.												
at Gonzaga												
vs. Green Bay												
vs. IUPUI												
at Miami (Ohio)												
San Diego Christian	1-3	0-1	0-0	1-3-4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	8
Saint Mary's												
Wichita St.												
at California	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
San Diego	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Cal Poly												
UC Santa Barbara	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
vs. San Francisco	1-3	1-3	0-0	0-1-1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
vs. IUPUI	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Occidental	3-6	0-1	3-3	2-2-4	0	9	0	0	1	0	14	
at TCU*												
at Utah*												
UNLV*												
at New Mexico*												
Air Force*												
at Brigham Young*												
Wyoming*	1-4	0-0	1-2	3-1-4	1	3	0	1	0	0	7	
at Colorado St.*												
TCU*												
Utah*	1-3	0-0	0-0	0-1-1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	
at UNLV*												
New Mexico*												
at Air Force*												
Brigham Young*												
at Wyoming*	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	
Colorado St.*												
vs. Utah												
at UNLV												
vs. Brigham Young												
vs. Northern Colorado												
vs. Temple												
vs. Connecticut												

**▶ Williams Career Statistics**

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts	Avg.
09-10	12-0	87-7.3	8-18	.444	2-5	.400	5-6	.833	2	12	14	1.2	15-0	3	3	1	0	23	1.9
10-11	10-0	49-4.9	8-21	.381	1-5	.200	4-5	.800	6	8	14	1.4	5-0	0	1	1	0	21	2.1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22-0</b>	<b>136-6.2</b>	<b>16-39</b>	<b>.410</b>	<b>3-10</b>	<b>.300</b>	<b>9-11</b>	<b>.818</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>20-0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2.0</b>

## Career Highs

**Points**  
Career 9 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)

**Rebounds**  
Career 3 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)

**Assists**  
Career 6 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)

**Field Goals**  
Career 3 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)

**Field Goals Attempted**  
Career 6 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)

**Three-Point Field Goals**  
Career 1 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
1 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)

**Three-Point FG Attempted**  
Career 2 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
2 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)

**Free Throws**  
Career 4 vs. San Diego (12-11-10)

**Free Throws Attempted**  
Career 6 vs. San Diego (12-11-10)

**Steals**  
Career 2 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)

**Blocked Shots**  
Career None

**Minutes Played**  
Career 23 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)



# 3 • LaBradford Franklin

**Guard • 6-2 • 170 • Freshman - HS**  
**Temecula, Calif. (Great Oak High)**

## Season Highlights

- ▶ Has 23 assists in his last 14 games (132 minutes), including 21 in his last 12 (120 minutes).
- ▶ Recorded 13 assists in his last eight games (78 minutes).

## Game Highlights

- ▶ Had two points and an assist in three minutes at Wyoming (3-1-11).
- ▶ Grabbed a pair of rebounds in seven minutes vs. Utah (2-8-11).
- ▶ Had six points (2-2 FG, 1-1 3FG), two rebounds and two assists in eight minutes vs. Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ In 17 minutes vs. Occidental (12-31-10), he finished with four points, three assists and one steal.
- ▶ Started his first career game in place of an ill Kawhi Leonard vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10). In a career-high 23 minutes, he finished with two assists, a personal-best two steals and one rebound.
- ▶ Knocked down a career-high four free throws and added three assists vs. San Diego (12-11-10).
- ▶ Career numbers of nine points and a game-high six assists in 20 minutes vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10).
- ▶ Finished with three points, one rebound and one assist in eight minutes, his first stats of his career, vs. IUPUI (11-21-10).
- ▶ In the exhibition vs. Point Loma Nazarene, he finished with a game-high six assists and grabbed five rebounds in 19 minutes off the bench.

## 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
at Gonzaga	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0+
vs. Green Bay	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
vs. IUPUI	1-1	0-0	1-1	0-1-1	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	8
at Miami (Ohio)	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
San Diego Christian	3-6	1-1	2-2	1-1-2	1	9	6	3	0	0	0	20
Saint Mary's	2-2	0-0	2-2	0-3-3	1	6	2	1	0	0	0	10
Wichita St.	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-1-1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	6
at California	0-2	0-1	2-2	0-0-0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
San Diego	0-2	0-1	4-6	0-1-1	1	4	3	0	0	0	0	12
Cal Poly	*	0-3	0-2	0-0	0-1-1	4	0	2	5	0	2	23
UC Santa Barbara	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-1-1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	6
vs. San Francisco	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
vs. IUPUI	Did Not Play - CD											
Occidental	2-4	0-2	0-0	0-1-1	0	4	3	1	0	1	0	17
at TCU*	Did Not Play - CD											
at Utah*	Did Not Play - CD											
UNLV*	Did Not Play - CD											
at New Mexico*	Did Not Play - CD											
Air Force*	Did Not Play - CD											
at Brigham Young*	Did Not Play - CD											
Wyoming*	2-2	1-1	1-2	0-2-2	1	6	2	1	0	0	0	8
at Colorado St.*	Did Not Play - CD											
TCU*	Did Not Play - CD											
Utah*	0-2	0-1	0-0	0-2-2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
at UNLV*	Did Not Play - CD											
New Mexico*	Did Not Play - CD											
at Air Force*	Did Not Play - CD											
Brigham Young*	Did Not Play - CD											
at Wyoming*	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	3
Colorado St.*	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Utah	Did Not Play - CD											
at UNLV	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Brigham Young	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Northern Colorado	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Temple	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Connecticut	Did Not Play - CD											

## ▶ Franklin Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts	Avg.
10-11	17-1	135-7.9	11-27	.407	2-10	.200	12-15	.800	1	14	15	0.9	12-0	23	17	0	3	36	2.1

### Season/Career Highs

**Points**  
 Season 22 vs. New Mexico (2-16-11)  
 Career 28 vs. Utah (2-20-10)

**Rebounds**  
 Season 16 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 Career 16 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 16 vs. LBSU (11-21-07)

**Assists**  
 Season 8 vs. Utah (3-10-11)  
 Career 8 vs. Utah (3-10-11)

**Field Goals**  
 Season 8 at Air Force (2-19-11)  
 8 at TCU (1-5-11)  
 Career 10 vs. Utah (2-20-10)  
 10 at Utah (1-19-10)  
 10 vs. NAU (11-28-09)

**Field Goals Attempted**  
 Season 15 at Utah (1-8-11)  
 Career 17 at Utah (1-19-10)

**Three-Point Field Goals**  
 Season 1 vs. Utah (2-8-11)  
 1 at Utah (1-8-11)  
 Career 1 - four times

**Three-Point FG Attempted**  
 Season 2 vs. Utah (2-8-11)  
 2 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 2 at Utah (1-8-11)  
 Career 2 - three times

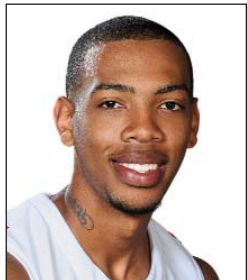
**Free Throws**  
 Season 10 vs. New Mexico (2-16-11)  
 Career 10 vs. New Mexico (2-16-11)

**Free Throws Attempted**  
 Season 12 vs. New Mexico (2-16-11)  
 Career 14 vs. Utah (2-20-10)

**Steals**  
 Season 2 at UNLV (3-11-11)  
 2 at Colorado St. (2-2-11)  
 2 at TCU (1-5-11)  
 2 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 4 vs. UNLV (2-13-10)

**Blocked Shots**  
 Season 6 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 6 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)  
 Career 6 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 6 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)  
 6 vs. UC Riverside (12-29-09)  
 6 vs. San Diego (2-4-08)

**Minutes Played**  
 Season 38 at Air Force (2-19-11)  
 Career 42 vs. Portland (3-7-08)



# 4 • Malcolm Thomas

**Forward • 6-9 • 220 • Senior - 1L  
 San Diego, Calif. (San Diego City College)**

**All-MWC 2nd Team, All-MWC Defensive Team**

### Streaks and Trends

- ▶ Nine double-doubles this season and 19 in his career.
- ▶ 20 assists in his last five games (4.0 avg).
- ▶ Scored 20 or more points in back-to-back games (vs. New Mexico, at Air Force) for the first time in his career.
- ▶ Is 52-for-99 from the field (.525) in his last 12 games.
- ▶ Has 69 blocked shots in his last 30 games (2.3 bpg).
- ▶ Is 89 for his last 130 from the free-throw line (.685) after starting 13 for 28 (.464).
- ▶ Nine-plus rebounds in 13 of his last 23 games (205; 8.9 rpg).
- ▶ Started 67 straight games, second-longest active streak on the team (Gay - 70).

### Season Highlights

- ▶ MWC Player of the Week (Jan. 10, Dec. 20, Dec. 6).
- ▶ Played a career-high 45 minutes vs. Temple (3-19-11) and finished with 13 points, nine rebounds and four blocks, which tied the SDSU postseason tournament record.
- ▶ Led team in assists for second straight game (5) at UNLV (3-11-11) in the MWC semis. Added 13 points, eight rebounds.
- ▶ Nearly had a triple-double vs. Utah (3-10-11) in the quarter-finals of the MWC Championship with 13 points, 10 rebounds and career-high eight rebounds.
- ▶ Was 6-for-9 from the field and 3-for-3 from the line en route to 15 points and 11 rebounds at Wyoming (3-1-11).
- ▶ Grabbed 11 rebounds vs. No. 7 BYU (2-26-11).
- ▶ Scored a game-high 20 points, 13 of which were in the second half, and had 13 rebounds at Air Force (2-19-11).
- ▶ Scored a season-high 22 points and made a career-high 10 free throws, and added four blocks vs. UNM (2-16-11).
- ▶ Snapped a five-game double-double drought with 11 points and a game-high 14 rebounds vs. TCU (2-5-11).
- ▶ Blocked a career-high six shots and grabbed six rebounds vs. Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ Finished with a career-high-matching 16 rebounds and added 14 points in the win vs. UNLV (1-12-11).
- ▶ Had season-high 11 defensive rebounds and finished with a game-high 14, while scoring 17 points at Utah (1-8-11).
- ▶ Had 18 points and 10 rebounds at TCU (1-5-11). Also had two assists, two blocks and two steals.
- ▶ Went for 18 points and 10 rebounds vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10).
- ▶ Had 18 points and a season-high 15 rebounds vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10). Also added a game-high five blocked shots.
- ▶ Became the third player in the nation this season to post a 15-point, 15 rebound, 5-blocked shot game when he finished with 18 points, 15 rebounds and five blocks vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10).
- ▶ Scored 20 points on 6-of-8 shooting and eight free throws vs. San Diego (12-11-10).
- ▶ Blocked a career-high-tying six shots, while adding 12 points vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10).
- ▶ Recorded 16 points and six rebounds at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10) en route to being named to the all-tournament team at the Oxford Subregional of the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic.
- ▶ Grabbed 10 rebounds and dished out a team-high six assists at Long Beach State (11-13-10).

### Career Highlights

- ▶ Has 31 career double-digit rebounding games.
- ▶ Led the team in assists 18 times in his Aztec career, which ranks second on the team behind D.J. Gay.

### SDSU Career Rankings

▶ 2nd in blocks, 6th in consecutive games started, 8th in rebounding average, 9th in field-goal percentage, 13th (Div. I) in rebounds, 15th in games started

### 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.	* 4-10	0-1	1-2	3-7-10	3	9	6	3	1	0	31	
at Gonzaga	* 0-3	0-0	0-0	0-1-1	5	0	1	2	0	1	19	
vs. Green Bay	* 4-6	0-0	4-10	4-4-8	2	12	3	5	2	0	32	
vs. IUPUI	* 2-5	0-0	0-0	1-2-3	4	4	0	1	1	0	26	
at Miami (Ohio)	* 6-10	0-0	4-4	2-4-6	3	16	0	4	1	0	25	
San Diego Christian	* 4-5	0-0	1-2	2-6-8	1	9	3	2	1	1	18	
Saint Mary's	* 5-8	0-0	2-5	2-4-6	2	12	1	3	6	1	28	
Wichita St.	* 5-7	0-0	2-5	2-3-5	3	12	1	1	4	1	29	
at California	* 2-6	0-0	4-6	2-4-6	4	8	4	1	1	0	32	
San Diego	* 6-8	0-0	8-9	1-5-6	1	20	0	1	2	1	29	
Cal Poly	* 7-9	0-0	4-6	6-9-15	1	18	3	1	5	1	36	
UC Santa Barbara	* 7-8	0-0	4-5	5-5-10	2	18	4	3	2	0	27	
vs. San Francisco	* 3-6	0-0	4-5	3-1-4	3	10	1	2	3	0	32	
vs. IUPUI	* 5-8	0-1	2-4	4-5-9	2	12	1	2	1	0	29	
Occidental	* 4-8	0-0	6-6	4-5-9	1	14	3	3	0	2	26	
at TCU*	* 8-10	0-1	2-2	3-7-10	2	18	2	1	2	2	31	
at Utah*	* 6-15	1-2	4-7	3-11-14	1	17	2	4	2	1	34	
UNLV*	* 5-8	0-2	4-7	4-12-16	2	14	2	2	2	0	33	
at New Mexico*	* 2-7	0-1	2-2	2-5-7	4	6	3	3	4	0	26	
Air Force*	* 3-7	0-0	2-6	4-5-9	1	8	3	3	2	0	31	
at Brigham Young*	* 4-11	0-0	2-2	2-4-6	4	10	1	2	2	0	36	
Wyoming*	* 1-3	0-0	0-0	1-5-6	0	2	3	0	6	1	23	
at Colorado St.*	* 3-8	0-1	0-0	2-4-6	2	6	0	5	1	2	30	
TCU*	* 4-9	0-0	3-6	6-8-14	4	11	1	3	1	0	35	
Utah*	* 3-5	1-2	1-2	2-8-10	2	8	5	1	3	0	28	
at UNLV*	* 3-5	0-0	3-4	2-5-7	4	9	2	2	1	0	34	
New Mexico*	* 6-12	0-0	10-12	1-5-6	1	22	1	2	4	0	37	
at Air Force*	* 8-13	0-0	4-8	8-5-13	2	20	0	2	3	0	38	
Brigham Young*	* 3-10	0-1	3-5	7-4-11	1	9	1	3	1	0	31	
at Wyoming*	* 6-9	0-0	3-3	2-9-11	2	15	2	1	2	0	29	
Colorado St.*	* 2-2	0-0	4-4	2-1-3	2	8	2	1	1	0	26	
vs. Utah	* 6-10	0-0	1-4	4-6-10	2	13	8	2	1	0	34	
at UNLV	* 3-5	0-0	7-10	2-6-8	3	13	5	3	0	2	34	
vs. Brigham Young	* 4-10	0-0	1-3	2-5-7	2	9	3	0	2	1	33	
vs. Northern Colorado	* 2-6	0-0	0-1	2-2-4	1	4	1	0	1	0	26	
vs. Temple	* 6-12	0-0	1-1	4-5-9	3	13	3	3	4	1	45	
vs. Connecticut												

### ▶ Thomas Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts	Avg.
07-08*	32-28	967-30.2	148-288	.514	0-0	.000	105-183	.574	99	182	281	8.8	79-2	50	90	64	20	401	12.5
09-10	34-33	1063-31.3	140-258	.543	2-5	.400	88-167	.527	90	170	260	7.6	73-1	77	66	52	29	370	10.9
10-11	36-36	1093-30.4	152-284	.535	2-12	.167	103-158	.652	106	187	293	8.1	82-1	81	77	75	18	409	11.4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>102-97</b>	<b>3123-30.6</b>	<b>440-830</b>	<b>.530</b>	<b>4-17</b>	<b>.235</b>	<b>296-508</b>	<b>.583</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>234-4</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>11.6</b>

\* at Pepperdine

### Season/Career Highs

<b>Points</b>	
Season	15 at Wyoming (3-1-11)
Career	15 at Wyoming (3-1-11)
<b>Rebounds</b>	
Season	10 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)
Career	10 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)
<b>Assists</b>	
Season	2 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)
Career	4 at BYU (2-24-10)
<b>Field Goals</b>	
Season	6 at Wyoming (3-1-11)
Career	6 at Wyoming (3-1-11) 6 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)
<b>Field Goals Attempted</b>	
Season	9 at Wyoming (3-1-11) 9 vs. Utah (2-8-11)
Career	12 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)
<b>Three-Point Field Goals</b>	
Season	1 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11) 1 vs. UCSB (12-18-10) 1 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)
Career	1 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11) 1 vs. UCSB (12-18-10) 1 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10) 1 at New Mexico (2-6-10)
<b>Three-Point FG Attempted</b>	
Season	2 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)
Career	2 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)
<b>Free Throws</b>	
Season	3 vs. Utah (3-10-11) 3 at Wyoming (3-1-11) 3 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11) 3 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)
Career	4 vs. New Mexico (1-5-10) 4 vs. CS Fullerton (12-9-0-9) 4 vs. Maryland (11-28-06)
<b>Free Throws Attempted</b>	
Season	4 vs. Utah (3-10-11) 4 at Wyoming (3-1-11) 4 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11) 4 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)
Career	7 vs. CS Fullerton (12-9-0-9)
<b>Steals</b>	
Season	1 - six times
Career	2 vs. UCSD (11-14-09)
<b>Blocked Shots</b>	
Season	3 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)
Career	3 - three times
<b>Minutes Played</b>	
Season	23 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
Career	27 vs. UCSD (11-14-09)



# 5 • Brian Carlwell

**Center • 6-11 • 300 • Senior - 1L**  
**Maywood, Ill. (Proviso East (Ill.) High/Illinois)**

### Streaks and Trends

- ▶ Is 48 for his last 90 (.533) from the field and 11 for his last 22 (.500) over the course of his last eight outings.
- ▶ Has made nine of his last 12 free-throw attempts.
- ▶ Has 19 turnover-free games and only 24 miscues in 36 games this year.
- ▶ Has scored in 29 of his last 34 games in which he has attempted a field goal.
- ▶ Has three or more rebounds in seven of his last 12 games (41 total; 3.4 rpg).
- ▶ Played in 70 consecutive games at San Diego State, tied with Malcolm Thomas for the second longest streak on the team (Gay - 139).

### Season Highlights

- ▶ Grabbed four rebounds in 10 minutes off the bench vs. Northern Colorado (3-17-11) in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.
- ▶ Made a season-high three free throws in the quarterfinal round of the MWC Championship vs. Utah (3-10-11)
- ▶ Finished with four points, four rebounds and two blocked shots on Senior Night vs. Colorado State (3-5-11).
- ▶ In 17 minutes off the bench at Wyoming (3-1-11), he scored a career-high 15 points on a personal-best six field goals and a season-high three free throws. Also blocked a game-high two shots.
- ▶ Knocked down both of his field-goal attempts and finished with four points and two rebounds vs. No. 7 Brigham Young (2-26-11).
- ▶ Grabbed a season-high five offensive boards (6 total) and blocked two shots vs. New Mexico (2-16-11).
- ▶ Posted his second double-figure scoring game of the season with 10 points, while adding three rebounds and two blocks vs. Utah (2-8-11).
- ▶ Grabbed a career-high 10 rebounds, scored eight points, blocked a personal-best three shots and tied his season high with one steal vs. Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ In 13 minutes vs. Air Force (1-19-10), he had six points and five rebounds, including a season-high three offensive boards.
- ▶ In only nine minutes off the bench at TCU (1-5-11), he scored eight points (4-6 FG) and grabbed six rebounds for the second consecutive game.
- ▶ Started his first game of the season vs. Occidental (12-31-10) in place of an injured Billy White. Played a season-high 23 minutes, scored seven points and grabbed six rebounds.
- ▶ Finished with eight points and three rebounds vs. San Diego (12-11-10).
- ▶ Contributed eight points and two rebounds at No. 11/12 Gonzaga (11-16-10).

### Career Highlights

- ▶ Has six career double-figure scoring efforts in his Aztec career.

### SDSU Career Rankings

- ▶ 20th in blocked shots

2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics																
Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP				
at Long Beach St.	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2				
at Gonzaga	3-7	0-2	2-3	0-2	2	8	2	0	0	1	14					
vs. Green Bay	2-3	0-0	1-2	2-1	3	1	5	0	0	1	0	8				
vs. IUPUI	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	14				
at Miami (Ohio)	2-2	0-0	0-0	0-2	2	1	4	0	1	1	0	16				
San Diego Christian	3-4	0-0	0-0	0-1	1	0	6	0	1	2	0	17				
Saint Mary's	2-2	1-1	0-0	1-1	2	0	5	0	1	2	0	12				
Wichita St.	0-1	0-0	3-4	0-2	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	12				
at California	0-3	0-1	0-0	1-1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	8				
San Diego	3-5	0-0	2-2	2-1	3	1	8	0	1	0	0	11				
Cal Poly	0-1	0-0	1-2	0-0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4				
UC Santa Barbara	4-6	1-1	2-2	2-1	3	2	11	0	1	2	1	12				
vs. San Francisco	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8				
vs. IUPUI	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	13				
Occidental	* 3-6	0-0	1-5	3-3	6	1	7	1	3	0	0	23				
at TCU*	4-6	0-0	0-0	3-3	6	1	8	0	0	0	0	9				
at Utah*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	6				
UNLV*	1-2	0-0	0-0	1-1	2	1	2	1	0	1	0	7				
at New Mexico*	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	10				
Air Force*	3-5	0-1	0-0	3-2	5	1	6	0	1	0	0	13				
at Brigham Young*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4				
Wyoming*	2-5	1-1	3-4	4-6	10	5	8	1	1	3	1	16				
at Colorado St.*	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	11				
TCU*	0-3	0-1	0-0	1-1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	9				
Utah*	5-9	0-0	0-2	1-2	3	10	0	0	2	0	2	22				
at UNLV*	1-2	0-0	2-2	2-3	5	3	4	0	3	1	0	16				
New Mexico*	1-3	0-0	1-3	5-1	6	4	3	0	1	2	1	14				
at Air Force*	1-2	0-0	1-2	2-1	3	2	3	0	2	0	0	12				
Brigham Young*	2-2	0-0	0-0	1-1	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	10				
at Wyoming*	6-9	0-0	3-4	4-4	8	1	15	1	1	2	0	17				
Colorado St.*	1-1	0-0	2-2	2-2	4	0	4	0	1	2	0	15				
vs. Utah	0-2	0-0	3-4	1-0	1	0	3	0	3	0	0	12				
at UNLV	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	9				
vs. Brigham Young	1-3	0-0	1-2	1-1	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	11				
vs. Northern Colorado	0-2	0-0	0-0	1-3	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	10				
vs. Temple	1-2	0-0	0-0	1-0	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	8				
vs. Connecticut																

### ▶ Carlwell Career Statistics

\* at Illinois

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts.	Avg.
06-07*	26-0	183-7.0	14-31	.452	0-0	.000	16-31	.516	19	17	36	1.4	24-0	3	10	10	8	44	1.7
07-08*	3-0	5-1.7	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0	0	0	0.0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
09-10	34-3	490-14.4	64-104	.615	1-2	.500	31-56	.554	38	57	95	2.8	66-1	15	32	17	8	160	4.7
10-11	36-1	415-11.5	53-102	.520	3-9	.333	28-45	.622	44	54	98	2.7	44-1	8	24	25	6	137	3.8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>99-4</b>	<b>1093-11.0</b>	<b>131-237</b>	<b>.553</b>	<b>4-11</b>	<b>.364</b>	<b>75-132</b>	<b>.568</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>134-2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>3.4</b>

### Season/Career Highs

#### Points

Season 8 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)  
 Career 17 vs. Saint Mary's (12-13-08)  
 17 at N. Colo. (12-3-08)

#### Rebounds

Season 5 vs. UCSB (12-18-10)  
 Career 12 vs. UNLV (3-7-09)

#### Assists

Season 2 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)  
 2 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 2 at Utah (1-8-11)  
 Career 4 at Wyoming (1-9-10)  
 4 vs. CSUN (12-22-08)  
 4 at Fresno State (11-11-07)

#### Field Goals

Season 3 vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)  
 3 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)  
 Career 7 vs. Colorado St. (3-4-09)  
 7 vs. Saint Mary's (12-13-08)

#### Field Goals Attempted

Season 6 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)  
 Career 11 vs. Saint Mary's (12-13-08)

#### Three-Point Field Goals

Season 1 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 1 at BYU (1-26-11)  
 1 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)  
 Career 2 at Wyoming (1-9-10)  
 2 at N. Colo. (12-3-08)

#### Three-Point FG Attempted

Season 4 at LBSU (11-13-10)  
 Career 4 at LBSU (11-13-10)

#### Free Throws

Season 2 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)  
 2 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)  
 Career 4 vs. W. Carolina (11-28-08)  
 4 vs. Portland (11-10-07)

#### Free Throws Attempted

Season 3 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)  
 Career 7 vs. New Mexico (1-5-10)  
 7 vs. W. Carolina (11-28-08)

#### Steals

Season 2 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)  
 Career 3 vs. Seattle (11-28-08)

#### Blocked Shots

Season 1 vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)  
 Career 3 at Air Force (1-3-09)

#### Minutes Played

Season 20 at Utah (1-8-11)  
 20 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)  
 Career 35 at Air Force (1-3-09)



# 10 • Tim Shelton

**Forward • 6-7 • 245 • Junior - 2L**  
**Fresno, Calif. (Clovis West High)**

### Streaks and Trends

- ▶ Last 17 games played (138 minutes): 26 points, 21 rebounds, six assists, one turnover.
- ▶ Has not turned the ball over more than once in any game this season.
- ▶ Made three of his last four three-point field goals after starting the season 1-for-13 from behind the arc.

### Season Highlights

- ▶ Knocked down his third straight three-point field-goal attempt vs. No. 8/8 BYU (3-12-11) in the MWC championship game. Finished with three points and one rebound in five minutes.
- ▶ Had two points and two rebounds in four minutes vs. Utah (3-10-11) in the quarterfinals of the MWC Championship.
- ▶ Missed the Wyoming in Laramie due to illness, but returned in the next game vs. Colorado State (3-5-11) and had two points and one rebound.
- ▶ Posted three points and three rebounds in just six minutes at No. 9 Brigham Young (1-26-11).
- ▶ Tied his season high with two assists vs. Air Force (1-19-11).
- ▶ Produced four points (2-3 FG), three rebounds, a season-high two assists and zero turnovers in 19 minutes at New Mexico (1-15-11).
- ▶ Played a season-high-tying 20 minutes and contributed two points, two rebounds, a season-high two assists and a steal at Utah (1-8-11). Also drew four offensive fouls on the Utes.

- ▶ Went 3-for-3 from the field en route to six points and grabbed three rebounds in 16 minutes off the bench vs. IUPUI (12-22-10).
- ▶ Gathered a season-high five rebounds in just eight minutes vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10).
- ▶ Grabbed four rebounds at California (12-8-10).
- ▶ Had best game of season vs. Green Bay (11-20-10) with a season-best eight points, three rebounds and one assist in 15 minutes.

### Career Highlights

- ▶ Has led the team in scoring three times, rebounding 10 times and assists three times.
- ▶ Has 12 career double-figure scoring games and three games with 10 or more rebounds.
- ▶ Knee soreness and surgery limited him to nine games a year ago (2009-10).
- ▶ Has started 18 career games, including his final two of 2009-10 (at Wyoming, at UNLV).

### 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.	0-5	0-4	0-0	0-2-1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	13
at Gonzaga	1-2	0-0	0-0	1-0-1	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	11
vs. Green Bay	3-4	0-0	2-2	1-2-3	2	8	1	1	0	0	0	15
vs. IUPUI	Did Not Play - CD											
at Miami (Ohio)	1-6	1-3	0-0	0-2-2	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	20
San Diego Christian	Did Not Play - CD											
Saint Mary's	0-5	0-1	0-0	1-2-3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	18
Wichita St.	0-0	0-0	2-3	0-0-0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	7
at California	1-2	0-1	0-0	1-3-4	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	12
San Diego	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Cal Poly	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-3-3	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	11
UC Santa Barbara	1-3	0-0	0-0	1-4-5	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	8
vs. San Francisco	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	9
vs. IUPUI	3-3	0-0	0-0	2-1-3	1	6	0	1	1	0	0	16
Occidental	Did Not Play - CD											
at TCU*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
at Utah*	1-2	0-0	0-1	1-1-2	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	20
UNLV*	2-5	0-2	0-0	0-0-0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	12
at New Mexico*	2-3	0-1	0-1	0-3-3	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	19
Air Force*	0-0	0-0	1-2	2-0-2	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	8
at Brigham Young*	1-3	1-1	0-0	0-3-3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	6
Wyoming*	1-1	1-1	0-0	1-0-1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	7
at Colorado St.*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-2-2	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	6
TCU*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Utah*	Did Not Play - Injured											
at UNLV*	Did Not Play - Injured											
New Mexico*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
at Air Force*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Brigham Young*	0-2	0-0	0-0	0-2-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
at Wyoming*	Did Not Play - Illness											
Colorado St.*	1-2	0-0	0-0	1-0-1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	12
vs. Utah	1-1	0-0	0-2	0-2-2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
at UNLV	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
vs. Brigham Young	1-1	1-1	0-0	0-1-1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	5
vs. Northern Colorado	0-2	0-1	0-0	1-1-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
vs. Temple	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
vs. Connecticut												

### ▶ Shelton Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts	Avg.
07-08	4-3	113-28.3	16-29	.552	1-3	.333	7-9	.778	7	12	19	4.8	9-0	6	6	2	5	40	10.0
08-09	34-13	780-22.9	105-209	.502	8-25	.320	49-87	.563	73	88	161	4.7	75-3	43	32	11	21	267	7.9
09-10	9-2	116-12.9	9-26	.346	4-9	.444	8-18	.444	10	8	18	2.0	16-1	13	8	1	1	30	3.3
10-11	30-0	291-9.7	21-56	.375	4-17	.235	5-11	.455	13	34	47	1.6	34-0	12	9	1	6	51	1.7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>77-18</b>	<b>1300-16.9</b>	<b>151-320</b>	<b>.472</b>	<b>17-54</b>	<b>.315</b>	<b>69-125</b>	<b>.552</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>134-4</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>5.0</b>



### Season/Career Highs

<b>Points</b>	Season 15 at Colorado St. (2-2-11) 15 vs. Occidental (12-31-10) 15 at California (12-8-10) 15 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)
Career	25 vs. LMU (1-29-09) 25 vs. HBU (1-25-09)

<b>Rebounds</b>	Season 4 at Utah (1-8-11) 4 at Gonzaga (11-16-10) 4 at LBSU (11-13-10)
Career	5 vs. Portland (2-28-09)

<b>Assists</b>	Season 3 vs. BYU (2-26-11) 3 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11) 3 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)
Career	5 vs. HBU (1-25-09) 5 vs. San Francisco (1-23-09)

<b>Field Goals</b>	Season 6 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)
Career	8 vs. Gonzaga (3-8-09) 8 vs. LMU (1-29-09)

<b>Field Goals Attempted</b>	Season 13 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)
Career	15 vs. Gonzaga (3-8-09) 15 vs. Gonzaga (2-26-09)

<b>Three-Point Field Goals</b>	Season 5 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
Career	5 vs. Occidental (12-31-10) 5 vs. LMU (1-29-09) 5 vs. HBU (1-25-09)

<b>Three-Point FG Attempted</b>	Season 8 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11) 8 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
Career	9 vs. HBU (1-25-09)

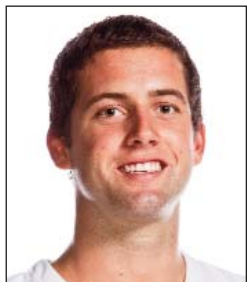
<b>Free Throws</b>	Season 5 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)
Career	8 vs. HBU (1-25-09) 8 vs. UTEP (12-30-08)

<b>Free Throws Attempted</b>	Season 6 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)
Career	8 - four times

<b>Steals</b>	Season 3 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)
Career	3 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)

<b>Blocked Shots</b>	Season 1 at TCU (1-5-11)
Career	1 at TCU (1-5-11)

<b>Minutes Played</b>	Season 37 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)
Career	43 vs. Portland (2-28-09)



# 11 • James Rahon

**Guard • 6-5 • 205 • Sophomore - TR**  
**San Diego, Calif. (Torrey Pines High/Santa Clara)**

### Streaks and Trends

- ▶ Has scored in double figures 29 times in his career and 11 times in a SDSU uniform.
- ▶ Had his streak of at least one three-point field goal in a career-best 16 straight games stopped vs. Colorado State (3-5-11). His previous career-long streak was 13 games set during the 2008-09 campaign at Santa Clara.
- ▶ In his last 16 games, he has hit 22 of his last 50 three-point field goals (.440).
- ▶ Knocked down multiple three-point field goals in 33 career games and 14 times as an Aztec.
- ▶ Has one turnover or less in 35 games this season.

### Season Highlights

- ▶ Broke a five-game double-figure scoring drought with 12 points (2-3 3FG) vs. Northern Colorado (3-17-11) in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.
- ▶ Knocked down two of three three-point field goals and finished with 10 points and a season-high three assists vs. No. 7 Brigham Young (2-26-11).
- ▶ Scored 12 points (2-4 3FG) and had three rebounds in a starting role at UNLV (2-12-11).
- ▶ Started his third game as an Aztec vs. Utah (2-8-11) and scored eight points.
- ▶ Matched his season high with 15 points on five field goals (three three-point field goals) in 22 minutes at Colorado State (2-2-11).
- ▶ Knocked down 4-of-8 three-point field goals and finished with 14 points and a season-high three assists vs. Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ Started the first two games of his Aztec career vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10) and UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10).
- ▶ Hit a career-high-tying five three-point field goals and finished with a season-high-matching 15 points vs. Occidental (12-31-10).
- ▶ Knocked down three three-pointers (3-5), the third time he has hit at least that many this year, en route to nine points vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10).
- ▶ Started for the first time of his Aztec career vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10) in place for an ill Chase Tapley. He finished with 14 points and three rebounds in a season-high 37 minutes.
- ▶ Scored 15 points off the bench, including 11 in the first half, in just 17 minutes of action at California (12-8-10). Connected on 3-of-4 from beyond the arc with all three coming in the first half.
- ▶ Went 5-for-6 from the field at No. 11/12 Gonzaga (11-16-10) and knocked down both three-pointers to finish with 12 points. Also grabbed four rebounds and had two assists.
- ▶ Knocked down three consecutive three-pointers in the second half at Long Beach State (11-13-10) to help SDSU pull away. He finished with 14 points off the bench (4-7 3FG) in his Aztec debut.

### Career Highlights

- ▶ Has 111 career three-point field goals in 68 career games.

### SDSU Career Rankings

- ▶ 2nd in three-point field-goal percentage.

2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics																
Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP				
at Long Beach St.	5-8	4-7	0-0	0-4-4	2	14	0	0	0	0	0	27				
at Gonzaga	5-6	2-2	0-0	2-2-4	2	12	2	1	0	1	0	29				
vs. Green Bay	1-2	0-1	0-0	0-0-1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	21				
vs. IUPUI	2-6	1-4	0-0	0-0-0	5	5	1	1	0	0	0	20				
at Miami (Ohio)	5-7	2-3	3-4	0-2-2	2	15	2	1	0	0	3	26				
San Diego Christian	3-7	2-2	0-1	2-1-3	1	8	3	0	0	0	0	23				
Saint Mary's	2-5	0-1	5-6	1-0-1	0	9	0	1	0	1	0	20				
Wichita St.	1-5	0-2	0-0	0-1-1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	18				
at California	5-6	3-4	2-4	0-0-0	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	17				
San Diego	2-6	1-3	0-0	0-2-2	1	5	1	0	0	0	1	17				
Cal Poly	* 6-13	0-4	2-2	1-2-3	3	14	1	0	0	1	37					
UC Santa Barbara	* 3-6	3-5	0-0	1-0-1	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	25				
vs. San Francisco	0-4	0-3	0-0	0-3-3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	18				
vs. IUPUI	0-3	0-2	0-0	0-1-1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	15				
Occidental	5-8	5-8	0-0	0-0-0	1	15	1	1	0	0	0	16				
at TCU*	2-7	2-5	0-0	1-0-1	2	6	0	1	1	1	1	20				
at Utah*	1-5	1-3	0-1	2-2-4	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	27				
UNLV*	1-2	1-1	0-0	0-1-1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	17				
at New Mexico*	2-5	2-5	0-0	0-0-0	3	6	1	1	0	0	0	20				
Air Force*	1-6	1-5	0-0	0-0-0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	16				
at Brigham Young*	3-5	1-2	0-0	1-1-2	1	7	0	1	0	0	0	19				
Wyoming*	5-9	4-8	0-1	1-1-2	2	14	3	2	0	0	0	21				
at Colorado St.*	5-7	3-4	2-3	0-1-1	0	15	0	1	0	1	0	22				
TCU*	1-5	1-3	4-4	1-1-2	2	7	0	1	0	1	0	33				
Utah*	* 2-5	1-2	3-5	0-2-2	1	8	0	1	0	0	0	29				
at UNLV*	* 4-7	2-4	2-2	0-3-3	3	12	1	0	0	1	35					
New Mexico*	* 2-5	1-2	0-2	0-2-2	1	5	2	1	0	0	0	22				
at Air Force*	* 1-7	1-7	0-0	0-3-3	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	21				
Brigham Young*	3-8	2-3	2-2	0-1-1	1	10	3	1	0	1	0	27				
at Wyoming*	2-6	1-2	0-0	0-1-1	2	5	0	1	0	0	0	21				
Colorado St.*	0-4	0-3	0-0	0-0-0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	16				
vs. Utah	1-3	1-2	0-0	0-0-0	1	3	1	0	0	1	23					
at UNLV	2-4	1-1	0-0	0-2-2	0	5	1	1	0	1	12					
vs. Brigham Young	1-5	0-3	0-0	1-1-2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	16				
vs. Northern Colorado	4-7	2-3	2-2	0-1-1	0	12	0	0	0	1	21					
vs. Temple	1-3	1-1	0-0	0-1-1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	15				
vs. Connecticut																

### ▶ Rahon Career Statistics

\* at Santa Clara

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts	Avg.
08-09*	32-17	863-27.0	118-287	.411	59-145	.407	66-85	.776	14	41	55	1.7	44-0	42	43	0	16	361	11.3
10-11	36-6	782-21.7	89-207	.430	52-120	.433	27-39	.692	14	43	57	1.6	54-1	28	18	1	15	257	7.1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>68-23</b>	<b>1645-24.2</b>	<b>207-494</b>	<b>.419</b>	<b>111-265</b>	<b>.419</b>	<b>93-124</b>	<b>.750</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>98-1</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>9.1</b>

### Season/Career Highs

**Points**  
 Season 23 vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)  
 23 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)  
 Career 26 vs. Wyoming (2-10-10)

**Rebounds**  
 Season 17 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 Career 21 at UNLV (3-13-10)

**Assists**  
 Season 5 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)  
 Career 5 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)  
 5 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)  
 5 vs. CS Fullerton (12-9-09)

**Field Goals**  
 Season 10 vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)  
 Career 10 vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)  
 10 vs. Wyoming (2-10-10)  
 10 at Wyoming (1-9-10)

**Field Goals Attempted**  
 Season 20 at BYU (1-26-11)  
 20 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)  
 Career 20 at BYU (1-26-11)  
 20 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)

**Three-Point Field Goals**  
 Season 4 vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)  
 Career 4 vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)

**Three-Point FG Attempted**  
 Season 5 vs. N. Colo. (3-17-11)  
 5 at BYU (1-26-11)  
 5 vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)  
 Career 5 - three times

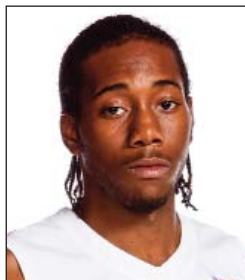
**Free Throws**  
 Season 9 vs. Colorado St. (3-5-11)  
 9 at Air Force (2-19-11)  
 9 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 9 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)  
 Career 9 - four times

**Free Throws Attempted**  
 Season 14 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)  
 Career 14 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)

**Steals**  
 Season 4 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)  
 Career 4 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)  
 4 at Air Force (3-6-10)

**Blocked Shots**  
 Season 2 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)  
 2 at California (12-8-10)  
 Career 3 vs. Tennessee (3-18-10)

**Minutes Played**  
 Season 43 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 Career 43 vs. Temple (3-19-11)



# 15 • Kawhi Leonard

**Forward • 6-7 • 225 • Sophomore - 1L**  
**Riverside, Calif. (King High)**

**All-MWC 1st Team, All-MWC Tournament Team, All-MWC Defensive Team, NABC All-District, USBWA All-District**

### Streaks and Trends

- ▶ 10+ rebounds in nine of his last 14 games (154; 11.0 rpg).
- ▶ Has a double-double in 13 of his last 19 outings.
- ▶ Made his last 11 free-throw attempts.
- ▶ Last 10 games: 51-59 FT (86.4 percent).
- ▶ Connected on 24 three-pointers after making 16 all of last year.
- ▶ Made 182-of-381 two-point FGA this season (47.8 percent).
- ▶ 10 20+ scoring games this year (9 away/neutral).

### Season Highlights

- ▶ Midseason candidate for the Naismith Award, one of 20 finalists for Wooden Award.
- ▶ Two-time MWC player of the week this season.
- ▶ Has 23 double-doubles this season.
- ▶ Finished with 16 points (6-6 FT) and nine rebounds in a career-high 46 minutes vs. Temple (3-19-11).
- ▶ Second career NCAA Tournament double-double vs. Northern Colorado (3-17-11) with 21 points and 10 rebounds. Hit three of five three-pointers.
- ▶ Exploded for 20 points and eight rebounds vs. No. 8/8 BYU (3-12-11) in the MWC title game.

- ▶ Continued his dominance of UNLV in the semis of the MWC tournament (3-11-11) by going for 18 points and eight rebounds.
- ▶ Torched Utah (3-10-11) in the MWC quarterfinals for a team-best 13 points and game-high 12 rebounds.
- ▶ Scored a game-high 17 points on a career-high nine free throws and added a game-high 12 rebounds vs. CSU (3-5-11).
- ▶ Against No. 7 BYU (2-26-11), had a team-high 17 points and game-high 13 rebounds. Also had a team-high four assists.
- ▶ Game-high 15 rebounds and 18 points at Air Force (2-19-11).
- ▶ Logged his first 20-point effort at home of the season with a game-high 22 points vs. New Mexico (2-16-11).

- ▶ Posted his fifth double-double in five career games at UNLV (2-12-11) with 14 points (5-5 FT) and a game-high 10 boards.
- ▶ Posted 12 points and a game-high 15 rebounds at Colorado State (2-2-11), while adding a game-high four assists.
- ▶ Battled flu-like symptoms and had a team-high 22 points and game-high 15 rebounds at No. 9 Brigham Young (1-26-11).
- ▶ Led the team in rebounds (15), assists (4) and steals (1), while adding 19 points at New Mexico (1-15-11).
- ▶ Pulled down a season-high 17 boards, scored 14 points and had a team-best four assists vs. UNLV (1-12-11).
- ▶ Recorded 20 points and nine rebounds at Utah (1-8-11).
- ▶ Season-high 23 points and 14 rebounds vs. San Francisco (12-21-10). Also knocked down a career-high-tying 10 field goals.
- ▶ Posted his seventh career 20-point effort of his career at Cal (12-8-10) with 20 points. Also blocked a season-high two shots.
- ▶ Snapped a two-game double-double drought with 16 points and 12 rebounds vs. Wichita State (12-4-10).
- ▶ Finished with 12 points, a game-high 13 rebounds and led all players with four assists at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10) en route to being named the CBE Classic Oxford Subregional MVP.
- ▶ Recorded 18 points and a game-high 12 rebounds at No. 11/12 Gonzaga (11-16-10).
- ▶ Finished with a game-high 21 points and 12 rebounds at Long Beach State (11-13-10). He nearly outrebounded the 49ers by himself in the second half (12-16) and had just as many defensive rebounds as LBSU (11).

### Career Highlights

- ▶ Has 40 career double-doubles (second most in school history, trailing Michael Cage 61).
- ▶ Has 55 career double-figure scoring efforts and 42 career double-figure rebounding games (nine with 15+).
- ▶ Has led the team in scoring 27 times, rebounding 42 times and assists 15 times.
- ▶ Has scored at least 20 points 12 times in his career.

### SDSU Career Rankings

▶ 2nd in rebound average, 7th in consecutive games started, 8th in rebounds, 16th in games started, 23rd in scoring average, 18th in blocks, 20th in steals, 20th in field goals, 27th in scoring

### 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.	* 9-17	0-3	3-3	1-11-12	2	21	3	1	1	2	37	
at Gonzaga	* 7-20	0-3	4-5	6-6-12	3	18	3	0	1	2	33	
vs. Green Bay	* 7-9	0-0	9-14	1-9-10	2	23	2	2	0	1	36	
vs. IUPUI	* 7-13	4-5	2-2	5-5-10	2	20	3	5	0	3	33	
at Miami (Ohio)	* 4-11	0-1	4-6	8-5-13	2	12	4	1	1	0	33	
San Diego Christian	* 6-12	2-4	0-0	2-4-6	0	14	0	0	0	1	23	
Saint Mary's	* 3-10	0-1	0-0	2-6-8	4	6	0	0	0	3	23	
Wichita St.	* 6-15	2-4	2-3	2-10-12	4	16	5	1	1	4	34	
at California	* 8-14	3-6	1-4	1-2-3	3	20	1	2	2	2	29	
San Diego	* 6-14	0-3	1-1	4-9-13	2	13	4	2	0	0	29	
Cal Poly	Did Not Play - Injured											
UC Santa Barbara	* 4-11	0-4	5-6	1-6-7	2	13	2	0	0	0	33	
vs. San Francisco	* 10-16	2-4	1-2	3-11-14	3	23	2	4	1	2	37	
vs. IUPUI	* 3-10	0-4	1-1	1-3-4	2	7	3	5	0	1	35	
Occidental	* 7-11	0-1	0-0	1-9-10	3	14	4	1	1	0	27	
at TCU*	* 7-13	0-3	0-0	3-8-11	3	14	2	4	0	2	25	
at Utah*	* 9-16	0-1	2-3	6-3-9	3	20	2	2	1	0	31	
UNLV*	* 3-11	0-2	9-10	3-14-17	1	15	4	1	0	2	36	
at New Mexico*	* 7-13	1-1	4-6	5-10-15	5	19	4	1	0	1	33	
Air Force*	* 5-14	0-3	0-2	4-6-10	1	10	2	2	2	3	37	
at Brigham Young*	* 8-20	1-5	5-8	9-6-15	2	22	2	6	1	1	36	
Wyoming*	* 1-5	0-1	0-0	1-5-6	2	2	4	1	0	0	25	
at Colorado St.*	* 5-14	0-2	2-2	2-13-15	3	12	4	4	0	1	36	
TCU*	* 5-13	0-0	1-2	3-7-10	1	11	2	2	1	1	35	
Utah*	* 5-16	0-0	2-4	5-9-14	1	12	3	1	1	3	30	
at UNLV*	* 4-13	1-1	5-5	2-8-10	3	14	0	3	0	0	38	
New Mexico*	* 7-19	0-0	8-10	3-6-9	5	22	3	1	1	2	38	
at Air Force*	* 4-14	1-2	9-10	7-8-15	3	18	2	2	1	2	34	
Brigham Young*	* 6-14	1-3	4-5	4-9-13	3	17	4	3	0	3	34	
at Wyoming*	* 3-5	0-1	6-9	1-8-9	3	12	2	4	0	3	23	
Colorado St.*	* 4-10	0-2	9-10	1-11-12	0	17	2	2	2	1	35	
vs. Utah	* 6-13	1-2	0-0	4-8-12	1	13	2	0	0	2	25	
at UNLV	* 7-13	0-1	4-4	4-4-8	4	18	1	3	2	2	33	
vs. Brigham Young	* 9-16	2-3	0-0	3-5-8	2	20	1	3	0	0	35	
vs. Northern Colorado*	* 9-14	3-5	0-0	1-9-10	2	21	2	1	1	0	36	
vs. Temple	* 5-14	0-1	6-6	1-8-9	3	16	3	4	0	2	46	
vs. Connecticut												

### ▶ Leonard Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts	Avg.
09-10	34-33	1064-31.3	166-365	.455	16-78	.205	85-117	.726	119	217	336	9.9	85-3	65	77	24	47	433	12.7
10-11	35-54	1143-32.7	206-463	.445	24-82	.293	109-143	.762	110	261	371	10.6	85-2	87	74	21	51	545	15.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>69-68</b>	<b>2207-32.0</b>	<b>372-828</b>	<b>.449</b>	<b>40-160</b>	<b>.250</b>	<b>194-260</b>	<b>.746</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>170-5</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>14.2</b>

### Career Highs

**Points**  
Career 13 vs. Utah (2-8-11)

**Rebounds**  
Career 10 vs. Utah (2-8-11)

**Assists**  
Career 2 vs. Utah (2-8-11)

**Field Goals**  
Career 4 vs. Utah (2-8-11)

**Field Goals Attempted**  
Career 8 at Wyoming (3-1-11)

**Three-Point Field Goals**  
Career 3 vs. Utah (3-10-11)

**Three-Point FG Attempted**  
Career 4 vs. Utah (3-10-11)

**Free Throws**  
Career 3 vs. Utah (2-8-11)

**Free Throws Attempted**  
Career 5 vs. Utah (2-8-11)

**Steals**  
Career 2 vs. Utah (3-10-11)

**Blocked Shots**  
Career 2 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)

**Minutes Played**  
Career 20 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)



# 21 • Jamaal Franklin

**Guard • 6-5 • 185 • Freshman - HS**  
**Phelan, Calif. (Westwind Prep International (Ariz.))**

### Streaks and Trends

- ▶ Has played in six of the last seven games. Had played in a career-high six straight before not seeing the floor vs. Temple (3-19-11).
- ▶ Has grabbed at least one rebound in eight of his last 10 outings (22 total; 2.2 rpg).
- ▶ Has scored in 11 of his last 17 games played.
- ▶ Last 15 games played (126 minutes): 58 points, 28 rebounds, 19-for-36 field goals (.528).
- ▶ Made 16 of his 26 two-point field-goal attempts (.615).

### Season Highlights

- ▶ Had another productive day off the bench at UNLV (3-11-11): seven points in eight minutes.
- ▶ In just 11 minutes off the bench vs. Utah (3-10-11) in the MWC quarterfinals, he knocked down a career-high three three-point field goals en route to nine points. He also added a career-high two steals.
- ▶ Knocked down both free-throw attempts and threw down a dunk vs. Colorado State (3-5-11).
- ▶ Finished with six points and four rebounds in 17 minutes off the bench at Wyoming (3-1-11).
- ▶ In just 17 minutes vs. Utah (2-8-11), he produced his first career double-double with 13 points (4-5 FG, 2-3 3FG, 3-5 FT) and 10 rebounds. He also had a career-high two assists and one steal.
- ▶ Had two rebounds and one assist vs. TCU (2-5-11).
- ▶ Scored three points in an effective three minutes at Colorado2State (2-2-11).
- ▶ Hit his first career three-point field goal and free throw en route to four points vs. Wyoming (1-29-11). Also had one assist and blocked a shot in 15 minutes.
- ▶ Had two rebounds and an assist in only four minutes at TCU (1-5-11).
- ▶ Went a perfect 3-for-3 from the field en route to six points and added three rebounds vs. Occidental (12-31-10).
- ▶ Played a career-high 20 minutes vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10) and corralled six rebounds, blocked a career-best two shots and added two points and one assist.
- ▶ Scored two points, grabbed three rebounds and logged his first assist of his career vs. San Diego (12-11-10).
- ▶ Logged his first career stats with four points, one rebound and one blocked shot in 12 minutes vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10).
- ▶ Played in his first game of his career vs. IUPUI (11-21-10) and logged four minutes of action.
- ▶ Finished with four points, three rebounds, one assist, one block and one steal in 15 minutes vs. Point Loma Nazarene (exhibition).

### 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.												
at Gonzaga												
vs. Green Bay												
vs. IUPUI	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
at Miami (Ohio)	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
San Diego Christian	2-3	0-0	0-2	1-0-1	1	4	0	0	1	0	12	
Saint Mary's												
Wichita St.												
at California	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
San Diego	1-3	0-0	0-0	2-1-3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	5
Cal Poly	1-4	0-2	0-2	3-3-6	2	2	1	3	2	0	20	
UC Santa Barbara	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
vs. San Francisco												
vs. IUPUI												
Occidental	3-3	0-0	0-0	1-2-3	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	13
at TCU*	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-2-2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
at Utah*												
UNLV*												
at New Mexico*												
Air Force*												
at Brigham Young*												
Wyoming*	1-3	1-2	1-2	0-2-2	1	4	1	1	1	1	0	15
at Colorado St.*	1-2	0-1	1-1	0-0-0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
TCU*	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-2-2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
Utah*	4-5	2-3	3-5	4-6-10	2	13	2	1	0	1	17	
at UNLV*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-1-1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
New Mexico*												
at Air Force*	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-1-2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Brigham Young*												
at Wyoming*	3-8	0-2	0-0	1-3-4	2	6	1	2	0	0	17	
Colorado St.*	1-2	0-1	2-2	1-0-1	0	4	0	1	0	0	4	
vs. Utah	3-5	3-4	0-0	0-1-1	2	9	0	3	1	2	11	
at UNLV	2-3	1-2	2-3	0-0-0	1	7	0	0	0	0	8	
vs. Brigham Young	0-2	0-2	0-0	0-1-1	1	0	1	0	0	0	8	
vs. Northern Colorado	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
vs. Temple												
vs. Connecticut												

### ▶ Franklin Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts.	Avg.
10-11	21-0	172-8.2	23-47	.489	7-21	.333	9-17	.529	13	26	39	1.9	16-0	9	13	5	3	62	3.0

### Season/Career Highs

**Points**  
 Season 24 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 Career 24 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)

**Rebounds**  
 Season 8 at Air Force (2-19-11)  
 Career 8 at Air Force (2-19-11)

**Assists**  
 Season 5 vs. Utah (3-10-11)  
 5 vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)  
 5 vs. UCSB (12-18-10)  
 Career 9 vs. Pomona-Pitzer (12-31-09)

**Field Goals**  
 Season 10 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 Career 10 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)

**Field Goals Attempted**  
 Season 15 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 Career 15 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)

**Three-Point Field Goals**  
 Season 4 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 4 vs. UCSB (12-18-10)  
 Career 4 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 4 vs. UCSB (12-18-10)

**Three-Point Field Goals Attempted**  
 Season 7 at TCU (1-5-11)  
 Career 8 at BYU (2-24-10)

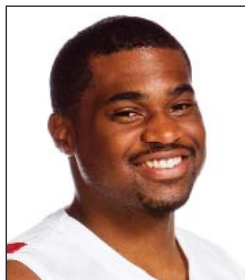
**Free Throws**  
 Season 4 at Air Force (2-19-11)  
 Career 4 at Air Force (2-19-11)

**Free Throws Attempted**  
 Season 4 at Air Force (2-19-11)  
 4 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 Career 4 at Air Force (2-19-11)  
 4 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 4 vs. UNLV (2-13-10)

**Steals**  
 Season 4 vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)  
 Career 4 vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)  
 4 vs. New Mexico (1-5-10)

**Blocked Shots**  
 Season 1 vs. N. Colo. (3-17-11)  
 1 at Air Force (2-19-11)  
 1 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 1 at TCU (1-5-11)  
 1 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 1 at California (12-8-10)  
 1 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)  
 Career 2 vs. BYU (1-23-10)  
 2 vs. Arizona (12-12-09)

**Minutes Played**  
 Season 39 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 Career 39 vs. Temple (3-19-11)



# 22 • Chase Tapley

**Guard • 6-2 • 200 • Sophomore - 1L  
 Sacramento, Calif. (Sacramento High)**

### Streaks and Trends

- ▶ 10+ points in a season-best three straight games, which matches his career high.
- ▶ Made a three-pointer in a career-high nine straight games until the streak was broken at Wyoming (3-1-11), but has made a three in 14 of his last 16 outings.
- ▶ Last three games: 8-15 3FG (.533)
- ▶ Has made 20 of his last 21 free-throw attempts.
- ▶ Has at least one steal in 25 of his last 32 games, including a career-high tying four vs. IUPUI (11-21-10).

### Season Highlights

- ▶ Hit a career-high four three-pointers en route to 12 points in a career-high 39 minutes vs. Temple (3-19-11).
- ▶ Scored 14 points for the second straight game vs. Northern Colorado (3-17-11).
- ▶ Scored 14 points (5-10 FG; 2-4 3FG) vs. No. 8/8 BYU (3-12-11) in the MWC championship game.
- ▶ Dished out a season-high five assists and had three steals vs. Utah (3-10-11) in the MWC quarterfinals.
- ▶ Finished with 11 points and a team-best three steals vs. No. 7 Brigham Young (2-26-11).
- ▶ Scored 10 points at Air Force (2-19-11), including four off a career-high four free throws. Also grabbed a career-high eight rebounds.
- ▶ Logged his first career 20-point game as he scored a career-best 24 points on 10-of-15 shooting, including 3-for-6 from behind the arc, in only 22 minutes vs. Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ Knocked down two three-point field goals for the second straight game vs. Air Force (1-19-11) en route to eight points and added a team-high three assists and three steals.
- ▶ Finished with 15 points and added five rebounds and three assists on the road at New Mexico (1-15-11).
- ▶ Scored 15 points and added a team-high four assists and a game-high three steals vs. Occidental (12-31-10).
- ▶ Dished out a season-high five assists and committed zero turnovers in a career-high 32 minutes vs. IUPUI (12-22-10).
- ▶ In his first game back after a bout with the flu, he connected on a career-high four three-pointers en route to 12 points and added a season-high five assists vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10).
- ▶ Was sent home prior to the Cal Poly (12-13-10) game with flu-like symptoms.
- ▶ Has three games this year (vs. Green Bay, vs. San Diego Christian, vs. Saint Mary's) where he has gone 6-for-9 from the field en route to 14 points. The SDCC and SMC outings were back to back and produced not only 6-for-9 shooting nights, but identical 2-for-3 efforts from behind the arc.
- ▶ Played 30 minutes and finished with a career-best seven rebounds and three assists at California (12-8-10).

### Career Highlights

- ▶ Has 18 career turnover-free games and 44 games with one turnover or less.
- ▶ Has started 47 games, including a career-high 15 straight from Dec. 31, 2009-Feb. 24, 2010.
- ▶ Has 27 career double-figure scoring efforts.
- ▶ Led the team in scoring six times in his career, rebounding twice and assists 12 times.

### SDSU Career Rankings

▶ 7th in three-point field-goal percentage, 12th in free-throw percentage, 15th in three-point field goals

### 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.	*	5-7	1-3	0-0	1-1-2	1	11	1	1	0	0	18
at Gonzaga	*	0-2	0-1	0-1	1-2-3	2	0	0	3	0	1	22
vs. Green Bay	*	6-9	0-2	2-3	0-0-0	2	14	3	1	0	1	29
vs. IUPUI	*	4-6	0-1	1-1	1-1-2	2	9	1	2	0	4	22
at Miami (Ohio)	*	2-5	0-2	0-0	1-0-1	2	4	1	2	0	1	18
San Diego Christian	*	6-9	2-3	0-0	0-3-3	1	14	1	4	0	1	22
Saint Mary's	*	6-9	2-3	0-0	3-2-5	0	14	0	0	1	1	27
Wichita St.	*	2-6	0-0	0-3-3	1	4	1	1	0	3	26	
at California	*	3-7	0-1	0-1	1-6-7	0	6	3	0	1	3	30
San Diego	*	1-5	0-3	0-0	1-0-1	1	2	2	0	0	1	26
Cal Poly		Did Not Play - Injured										
UC Santa Barbara		4-6	4-6	0-0	0-1-1	1	12	5	2	0	0	24
vs. San Francisco	*	2-3	0-1	0-0	1-2-3	1	4	2	3	0	2	26
vs. IUPUI	*	2-4	1-3	0-0	0-2-2	1	5	5	0	0	1	32
Occidental	*	6-7	2-2	1-1	2-2-4	1	15	4	1	1	3	23
at TCU*	*	5-12	2-7	0-0	1-1-1	1	12	4	1	1	1	31
at Utah*	*	2-5	1-2	0-0	1-1-2	0	5	2	1	0	0	25
UNLV*	*	1-8	0-3	0-0	0-0-0	1	2	1	0	1	0	27
at New Mexico*	*	5-8	2-4	3-4	0-5-5	2	15	3	1	0	1	28
Air Force*	*	2-4	2-4	2-2	0-1-1	1	8	3	2	0	3	29
at Brigham Young*	*	3-7	2-5	0-0	0-2-2	1	8	1	1	0	1	28
Wyoming*	*	10-15	3-6	1-1	0-0-0	1	24	2	2	0	1	22
at Colorado St.*	*	1-5	1-3	2-2	0-0-0	2	5	1	0	0	0	23
TCU*	*	1-2	1-1	0-0	0-0-0	0	3	0	0	0	0	5
Utah*		Did Not Play - Injured										
at UNLV*		Did Not Play - Injured										
New Mexico*		2-4	1-2	0-0	1-1-2	2	5	1	0	0	0	20
at Air Force*		2-5	2-5	4-4	1-7-8	2	10	0	1	1	0	27
Brigham Young*	*	4-11	1-5	2-2	1-1-2	2	11	1	2	0	3	27
at Wyoming*	*	2-5	0-2	2-2	1-2-3	2	6	2	2	0	1	25
Colorado St.*	*	4-7	1-3	0-0	0-2-2	1	9	2	2	0	2	26
vs. Utah	*	3-9	1-3	0-0	0-0-0	0	7	5	3	0	3	27
at UNLV	*	1-4	0-0	0-0	2-4-6	2	2	1	2	0	1	27
vs. Brigham Young	*	5-10	2-4	2-2	0-3-3	2	14	1	1	0	2	27
vs. Northern Colorado	*	5-11	2-6	2-3	1-3-4	2	14	3	1	1	1	27
vs. Temple	*	4-6	4-5	0-0	0-1-1	2	12	0	1	0	2	39
vs. Connecticut												

### ▶ Tapley Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts.	Avg.
09-10	33-17	773-23.4	98-196	.500	35-93	.376	20-28	.714	21	55	76	2.3	50-0	72	39	13	37	251	7.6
10-11	33-30	835-25.3	111-223	.498	40-101	.396	24-29	.828	20	59	79	2.4	42-0	62	43	7	44	286	8.7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>66-47</b>	<b>1608-24.4</b>	<b>209-419</b>	<b>.499</b>	<b>75-194</b>	<b>.387</b>	<b>44-57</b>	<b>.772</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>92-0</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>8.1</b>

## Season/Career Highs

### Points

Season 30 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 Career 30 at New Mexico (1-15-11)

### Rebounds

Season 6 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)  
 Career 6 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)  
 6 vs. NAU (11-28-09)  
 6 at Fresno St. (11-23-09)

### Assists

Season 6 vs. Utah (2-8-11)  
 6 vs. TCU (2-5-11)  
 6 at TCU (1-5-11)  
 6 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)  
 Career 7 vs. NAU (11-28-09)

### Field Goals

Season 7 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)  
 7 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 7 vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)  
 7 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)  
 7 at LBSU (11-13-10)  
 Career 8 at New Mexico (2-6-10)

### Field Goals Attempted

Season 16 vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)  
 Career 16 vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)

### Three-Point Field Goals

Season 7 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 Career 7 at New Mexico (1-15-11)

### Three-Point FG Attempted

Season 11 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)  
 11 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 Career 11 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)  
 11 at New Mexico (1-15-11)

### Free Throws

Season 9 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 Career 9 at New Mexico (1-15-11)

### Free Throws Attempted

Season 14 at New Mexico (1-15-11)  
 Career 14 at New Mexico (1-15-11)

### Steals

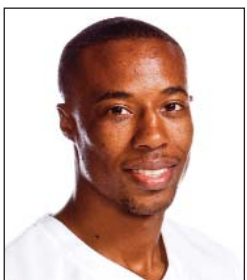
Season 5 vs. Utah (2-8-11)  
 Career 5 vs. Utah (2-8-11)  
 5 at Colorado St. (1-30-10)

### Blocked Shots

Season 1 at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)  
 Career 1 - nine times

### Minutes Played

Season 50 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 Career 50 vs. Temple (3-19-11)



# 23 • D.J. Gay

**Guard • 6-0 • 170 • Senior - 3L**  
**Sun Valley, Calif. (Poly High)**

**All-MWC 1st Team, All-MWC Tournament Team, NABC All-District**

## Streaks and Trends

- ▶ Went 177 consecutive minutes without a turnover and recorded 23 assists during that time. The streak was snapped vs. New Mexico (2-16-11).
- ▶ Has played 188 minutes in his last three games and has 10 assists and just one turnover.
- ▶ 56 assists and 13 TOs in his last 16 games (604 mins.).
- ▶ Made 33 3FGs in the last 18 games.

## Season Highlights

- ▶ Was one of 10 finalists for the 2011 Bob Cousy Award.
- ▶ Played a career-high 50 minutes vs. Temple (3-19-11).
- ▶ Hit his second game-winner of the season, this time with 4.9 seconds left at UNLV (3-11-11) in the semifinals of the MWC Championship. He finished with 15 points.
- ▶ Had game-high figures of 20 points (8-9 FT) and three assists, and zero turnovers in 40 minutes at UNLV (2-12-11).
- ▶ Scored a game-high 15 points, had a season-high six assists, and recorded a career-high five steals vs. Utah (2-8-11).
- ▶ Tied his season high with six assists and committed zero turnovers in 40 minutes vs. TCU (2-5-11).
- ▶ Hit the game-winner with 1.8 seconds left in regulation at Colorado State (2-2-11).
- ▶ Made 4-of-8 three-point field goals and finished with 12 points vs. Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ Posted his second straight 20-point game, the first time he has accomplished the feat in his career, when he finished with 20 points vs. Air Force (1-19-11). Connected on six three-pointers, had three assists and zero turnovers in 39 minutes.
- ▶ Went off for a career-high 30 points after hitting a career-best seven three-pointers and nine free throws at New Mexico (1-15-11). He also had a team-high four assists.
- ▶ Scored 15 of his 18 points and went 4-for-6 from beyond the arc in the second half at Utah (1-8-11).
- ▶ Matched his season high for assists (6) at TCU (1-5-11).
- ▶ Put up a team-high 18 points in 38 minutes vs. IUPUI (12-22-10).
- ▶ Went 6-of-8 from the floor (4-5 3FG) to finish with 16 points, four assists and two steals vs. San Diego (12-11-10).
- ▶ Scored all 14 of his points in the second half at California (12-8-10) and knocked down 4-of-5 from beyond the arc.
- ▶ Hit a team-best four three-pointers and finished with 20 points at Long Beach State (11-13-10).
- ▶ Grabbed a career-high-tying six rebounds vs. Green Bay (11-20-10).

## Career Highlights

- ▶ Has led the team in assists 54 times in his career, which is tops among all current Aztecs.
- ▶ Led the team in scoring 17 times in his career and in rebounding once.
- ▶ Has scored in double figures 55 times in his career and has nine 20-plus-point efforts.
- ▶ Played in all 139 games (119 starts) since stepping foot on campus.
- ▶ Became the 26th member of SDSU's 1,000-point club when he scored a career-high 30 at New Mexico (1-15-11).

## SDSU Career Rankings

- ▶ 1st in games played, 3rd in games started, 3rd in three-point field goals, 3rd in minutes played, 5th in consecutive games started, 8th in assists, 12th in three-point field-goal percentage, 13th in steals, 16th in scoring, 19th in field goals

## 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.	* 7-11	4-5	2-2	0-3-3	2	20	3	4	0	0	37	
at Gonzaga	* 3-7	1-3	2-4	0-0-0	1	9	3	3	0	1	38	
vs. Green Bay	* 3-7	0-2	1-3	2-4-6	2	7	1	2	0	2	33	
vs. IUPUI	* 2-7	2-6	0-0	1-0-1	0	6	4	0	0	0	33	
at Miami (Ohio)	* 7-11	4-6	1-2	0-3-3	1	19	4	2	1	1	35	
San Diego Christian	* 2-4	0-2	1-2	0-1-1	1	5	5	0	0	2	20	
Saint Mary's	* 3-10	1-5	1-1	0-3-3	0	8	3	1	0	1	40	
Wichita St.	* 3-8	2-6	0-9	0-4-4	2	14	6	2	0	0	36	
at California	* 5-9	4-6	0-0	1-2-3	3	14	3	3	0	0	37	
San Diego	* 6-8	4-5	0-0	0-0-0	0	16	4	0	0	2	27	
Cal Poly	* 1-11	0-7	8-8	0-1-1	0	10	2	3	0	0	39	
UC Santa Barbara	* 4-9	4-8	0-0	0-1-1	1	12	3	1	0	0	28	
vs. San Francisco	* 4-9	2-5	4-5	1-0-1	0	14	3	1	0	0	34	
vs. IUPUI	* 7-16	2-10	2-2	0-0-0	0	18	1	0	0	0	38	
Occidental	* 2-3	1-2	2-2	0-0-0	0	7	1	0	0	1	17	
at TCU*	* 2-9	0-5	0-0	0-3-3	0	4	6	2	0	2	40	
at Utah*	* 6-15	4-10	2-6	0-4-4	1	18	3	1	0	1	37	
UNLV*	* 2-9	1-3	0-0	0-1-1	2	5	2	2	0	0	40	
at New Mexico*	* 7-14	7-11	9-14	0-3-3	1	30	4	1	0	0	39	
Air Force*	* 7-13	6-11	0-1	0-2-2	1	20	3	0	0	1	39	
at Brigham Young*	* 0-7	0-5	2-3	1-1-2	3	2	4	0	0	2	37	
Wyoming*	* 4-8	4-8	0-0	0-2-2	1	12	2	1	0	2	26	
at Colorado St.*	* 3-9	0-3	0-0	0-3-3	1	6	4	0	0	2	37	
TCU*	* 4-11	0-3	1-2	0-2-2	0	9	6	0	0	1	40	
Utah*	* 5-15	1-3	4-4	1-0-1	0	15	6	0	0	5	33	
at UNLV*	* 6-12	0-1	8-9	1-2-3	0	20	3	0	0	1	40	
New Mexico*	* 3-9	3-4	2-4	0-2-2	1	11	3	2	0	2	40	
at Air Force*	* 3-12	2-10	1-4	0-2-2	1	9	5	1	0	0	32	
Brigham Young*	* 2-7	2-5	0-0	0-3-3	1	6	3	1	0	0	35	
at Wyoming*	* 4-11	1-5	2-3	0-2-2	0	11	3	2	0	3	30	
Colorado St.*	* 3-14	1-9	0-0	0-0-0	0	7	1	2	0	1	37	
vs. Utah	* 1-9	1-6	0-0	0-2-2	1	3	1	2	0	1	35	
at UNLV	* 6-11	3-4	0-0	0-2-2	1	15	1	4	0	2	40	
vs. Brigham Young	* 0-3	0-2	0-0	0-1-1	1	0	2	0	0	0	34	
vs. Northern Colorado	* 2-11	1-5	0-0	1-3-4	0	5	3	0	1	0	34	
vs. Temple	* 3-13	1-4	2-2	0-6-6	0	9	5	1	0	0	50	
vs. Connecticut												

## ► Gay Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts.	Avg.
07-08	33-26	784-23.8	66-183	.361	45-121	.372	16-25	.640	10	39	49	1.5	41-1	57	40	2	24	193	5.8
08-09	36-23	961-26.7	68-204	.333	40-122	.328	41-58	.707	14	41	55	1.5	34-0	63	44	3	26	217	6.0
09-10	34-34	1175-34.6	108-292	.370	61-160	.381	79-110	.718	17	59	76	2.2	51-0	108	60	3	37	356	10.5
10-11	36-36	1267-35.2	132-352	.375	69-195	.354	63-92	.685	9	68	77	2.1	29-0	116	44	2	37	396	11.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>139-119</b>	<b>4187-30.1</b>	<b>374-1031</b>	<b>.363</b>	<b>215-598</b>	<b>.360</b>	<b>199-285</b>	<b>.698</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>155-1</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>1162</b>	<b>8.4</b>

## Season/Career Highs

**Points**  
 Season 30 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)  
 Career 30 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)

**Rebounds**  
 Season 13 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 13 vs. N. Colo. (3-17-11)  
 Career 13 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 13 vs. N. Colo. (3-17-11)

**Assists**  
 Season 4 at California (12-8-10)  
 4 vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)  
 Career 4 - six times

**Field Goals**  
 Season 14 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)  
 Career 14 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)

**Field Goals Attempted**  
 Season 18 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)  
 Career 18 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)

**Three-Point Field Goals**  
 Season 2 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)  
 2 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 2 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)  
 Career 2 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)  
 2 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 2 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)  
 2 at Pacific (11-25-09)

**Three-Point FG Attempted**  
 Season 4 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)  
 Career 4 vs. UNLV (1-12-11)

**Free Throws**  
 Season 9 vs. TCU (2-5-11)  
 Career 9 vs. TCU (2-5-11)  
 9 vs. UNLV (2-13-10)

**Free Throws Attempted**  
 Season 10 vs. TCU (2-5-11)  
 Career 11 vs. UNLV (2-13-10)

**Steals**  
 Season 5 vs. BYU (3-12-11)  
 Career 5 vs. BYU (3-12-11)  
 5 vs. BYU (1-23-10)

**Blocked Shots**  
 Season 3 vs. Colorado St. (3-5-11)  
 3 at New Mexico (1-12-11)  
 3 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)  
 Career 4 vs. Wyoming (2-14-09)  
 4 vs. BYU (2-23-08)  
 4 at Colorado St. (1-29-08)

**Minutes Played**  
 Season 43 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 Career 43 vs. Temple (3-19-11)  
 43 at San Diego (12-2-09)



# 32 • Billy White

**Forward • 6-8 • 235 • Senior - 3L**  
**Las Vegas, Nev. (Green Valley High)**

**Honorable Mention All-MWC, All-MWC Tournament Team**

## Streaks and Trends

- ▶ Last six games: 14.2 ppg, 9.2 rpg, 1.7 apg, 1.8 spg, .507 FG
- ▶ Has back-to-back-to-back double-doubles for first time in his career entering the Connecticut game.
- ▶ Scored 10+ points in a season-best six straight games.
- ▶ Has made 52 straight starts in games he has played.
- ▶ Has scored in 49 straight outings in which he has attempted a field goal.
- ▶ Made six of his last 16 three-point field-goal attempts in the last 15 games after going 9-of-34 (26.5 percent) in his previous 115 career games.
- ▶ Last 12 games: 33-39 FT (.846); Last 4 games: 15-17 FT (.882).

## Season Highlights

- ▶ Continued his late-season tear with another double-double, this time finishing with a team-high 16 points and career-high 13 rebounds vs. Temple (3-19-11).
- ▶ Put up another double-double vs. Northern Colorado (3-17-11) with 12 points and a career-high 13 rebounds.
- ▶ Posted his first double-double of the season vs. No. 8/8 BYU (3-12-11) in the MWC title game with a team-high 21 points and 12 rebounds. Also added a career-high five steals.
- ▶ Had 12 points in the MWC semifinal win at UNLV (3-11-11).
- ▶ Nearly posted a double-double vs. Utah in the MWC quarterfinals vs. Utah (3-10-11) with 11 points and nine rebounds.
- ▶ Finished with 13 points (6-6 FG), five rebounds and a season-high three blocks vs. Colorado State (3-5-11).
- ▶ Scored a game-high 15 points (6-9 FG) vs. Utah (2-8-11).
- ▶ Scored a game-high 19 points on 5-of-7 shooting and a career-high nine free throws (9-10) vs. TCU (2-5-11).
- ▶ Was a perfect 4-for-4 from the field and 2-for-2 from the free-throw en route to 10 points. Also added six rebounds, one assist and no turnovers in 15 minutes vs. Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ Made a career-high two three-point field goals to finish with 12 points and five rebounds vs. Air Force (1-19-11).
- ▶ Blocked a season-high three shots at New Mexico (1-15-11).
- ▶ Scored 10 points, while knocking down a career-high two three-pointers, vs. UNLV (1-12-11).
- ▶ Had a team- and career-best four assists and added 10 points at California (12-8-10).
- ▶ Went off for a game-high 24 points on 10-of-12 shooting and scored nine points during a key 14-0 second-run, which covered 71 seconds, vs. Wichita State (12-4-10).
- ▶ Scored a career-high 30 points on a personal-best 14 field goals and grabbed nine rebounds at No. 11/12 Gonzaga.

## Career Highlights

- ▶ Has 61 career double-figure scoring performances and six games with 10 or more rebounds.
- ▶ Has five career double-doubles, including three this season, which have occurred in the last three outings.
- ▶ Has led the team in scoring 21 times in his career and in rebounding 21 times.
- ▶ Became the 25th member, and the 17th in the Division I era, of San Diego State's 1,000-point club with his nine-point effort vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10).

## SDSU Career Rankings

- ▶ 1st field-goal percentage, 1st in games started, 2nd in games played, 4th in field goals, 5th in steals, 6th in blocks, 6th in minutes played, 7th in scoring, 13th in rebounds

## 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.	* 3-5	0-0	0-0	4-2-6	3	6	3	1	1	2	26	
at Gonzaga	* 14-18	2-2	0-2	7-2-9	4	30	1	4	0	2	32	
vs. Green Bay	* 3-7	0-1	0-0	1-2-3	3	6	2	2	1	0	19	
vs. IUPUI	* 7-11	0-1	0-0	3-3-6	2	14	1	2	1	1	33	
at Miami (Ohio)	* 1-2	0-0	0-0	0-1-1	3	2	0	1	0	0	11	
San Diego Christian	* 5-6	0-0	0-0	1-2-3	1	10	1	1	0	1	19	
Saint Mary's	* 4-9	1-1	0-1	0-2-2	1	9	4	1	1	2	22	
Wichita St.	* 10-12	0-0	4-6	3-1-4	3	24	2	1	0	2	27	
at California	* 4-9	0-1	2-2	1-1-2	3	10	4	1	0	1	24	
San Diego	* 2-5	0-0	1-2	1-3-4	0	5	0	0	1	1	24	
Cal Poly	* 1-3	0-1	4-4	1-3-4	5	6	2	1	3	2	26	
UC Santa Barbara	* 4-6	0-0	3-4	1-2-3	4	11	1	1	0	0	27	
vs. San Francisco	* 4-6	0-1	0-1	0-1-1	4	8	2	3	2	1	31	
vs. IUPUI	* 2-4	0-0	2-2	0-4-4	4	6	1	2	0	4	19	
Occidental	Did Not Play - Injured											
at TCU*	* 1-4	0-0	2-4	1-1-2	1	4	2	0	1	1	28	
at Utah*	* 3-6	0-2	0-0	0-0-0	4	6	3	3	1	0	20	
UNLV*	* 4-8	2-4	0-0	0-3-3	3	10	0	5	0	0	28	
at New Mexico*	* 1-4	1-2	2-2	1-2-3	3	5	2	1	3	1	21	
Air Force*	* 4-5	2-2	2-3	3-2-5	3	12	1	2	0	0	27	
at Brigham Young*	* 3-9	0-2	0-2	1-4-5	3	6	2	2	0	1	34	
Wyoming*	* 4-4	0-0	2-2	1-5-6	3	10	1	0	0	0	15	
at Colorado St.*	* 4-8	0-0	1-2	0-3-3	3	9	2	2	2	0	26	
TCU*	* 5-7	0-0	9-10	1-3-4	1	19	1	1	0	0	33	
Utah*	* 6-9	0-0	3-4	1-2-3	3	15	1	0	0	0	23	
at UNLV*	* 2-8	0-1	0-0	1-2-3	5	4	1	5	0	2	29	
New Mexico*	* 0-0	0-0	0-0	2-0-2	2	0	0	2	2	0	25	
at Air Force*	* 1-4	0-0	5-5	1-2-3	4	7	3	3	0	1	25	
Brigham Young*	* 5-9	0-0	2-2	2-1-3	5	10	2	1	2	1	26	
at Wyoming*	* 3-4	0-0	0-0	1-0-1	3	6	0	1	0	0	22	
Colorado St.*	* 6-6	0-0	1-1	2-3-5	4	13	2	0	3	1	28	
vs. Utah	* 3-8	0-1	5-6	3-6-9	2	11	1	3	1	1	29	
at UNLV	* 5-13	0-2	2-2	3-0-3	2	12	2	1	1	0	31	
vs. Brigham Young	* 7-12	0-0	7-7	7-5-12	2	21	2	2	0	5	31	
vs. Northern Colorado	* 5-13	1-2	1-2	7-6-13	2	12	2	1	0	3	34	
vs. Temple	* 8-15	0-0	0-0	5-8-13	3	16	1	2	1	1	43	
vs. Connecticut												

## White Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts	Avg.
07-08	33-28	946-28.7	118-192	.615	0-2	.000	43-67	.642	74	121	195	5.9	105-5	34	53	25	47	279	8.5
08-09	33-30	746-22.6	124-187	.663	0-1	.000	44-66	.667	53	73	126	3.8	79-2	26	43	26	31	292	8.8
09-10	32-30	883-27.6	137-235	.583	6-21	.286	74-117	.632	65	71	136	4.3	79-2	44	67	24	33	354	11.1
10-11	35-35	918-26.2	144-259	.556	9-26	.346	58-78	.744	66	87	153	4.4	101-3	55	58	27	37	355	10.1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>133-123</b>	<b>3493-26.3</b>	<b>523-873</b>	<b>.599</b>	<b>15-50</b>	<b>.300</b>	<b>219-328</b>	<b>.668</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>364-12</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>1280</b>	<b>9.6</b>

### Season/Career Highs

**Points**  
 Season 8 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 Career 14 at BYU (1-24-09)  
 14 vs. Ark.-PB (12-29-09)

**Rebounds**  
 Season 3 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 3 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 3 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)  
 Career 6 at TCU (2-28-09)  
 6 vs. New Mexico (1-21-09)

**Assists**  
 Season 2 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career five times

**Field Goals**  
 Season 3 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 3 vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)  
 3 vs. SD Christian (11-26-10)  
 Career 6 at BYU (1-24-09)

**Field Goals Attempted**  
 Season 6 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 Career 9 vs. Fresno St. (11-22-08)

**Three-Point Field Goals**  
 Season 2 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 Career 2 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 2 vs. New Mexico (1-21-09)  
 2 vs. Ark.-PB (12-29-08)  
 2 vs. Seattle (11-28-08)

**Three-Point Field Goals Attempted**  
 Season 5 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 Career 5 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)

**Free Throws**  
 Season 3 at Wyoming (3-1-11)  
 Career 4 vs. Ark.-PB (12-29-08)  
 4 vs. UCSD (11-15-08)

**Free Throws Attempted**  
 Season 3 at Wyoming (3-1-11)  
 Career 6 vs. UCSD (11-15-08)

**Steals**  
 Season 1 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)  
 1 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 1 at LBSU (11-13-10)  
 Career 2 vs. TCU (1-28-09)

**Blocked Shots**  
 Season 2 at California (12-8-10)  
 Career 2 at California (12-8-10)

**Minutes Played**  
 Season 24 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)  
 Career 30 at UNLV (2-3-09)



# 42 • Mehdi Cheriet

**Forward • 6-9 • 225 • Senior - 1L**  
**Tarare, France (Arizona Western College)**

### Season Highlights

- ▶ On Senior Night vs. Colorado State (3-5-11), scored two points and grabbed a rebound off the bench.
- ▶ Played 10 minutes at Wyoming (3-1-11) and scored five points, a season-high three of which came off free throws.
- ▶ Scored a season-high eight points, tied his season high with three rebounds and one steal, and connected on a career-high tying two three-point field goals against Wyoming (1-29-11).
- ▶ Matched his season high for rebounds (3), steals (1) and minutes played (24), and tied his career high with two assists vs. Occidental (12-31-10).
- ▶ In just two minutes at California (12-8-10), he blocked a career-high two shots.
- ▶ Had an impressive line vs. Wichita State (12-4-10): 6 points, 3-of-4 shooting, 2 rebounds in 5 minutes.

### Career Highlights

- ▶ Played in 56 career games. He redshirted in 2009-10.
- ▶ Has scored in 39 career games.
- ▶ Grabbed a rebound in 20 of his last 30 games played.

### 2010-11 Game-By-Game Statistics

Opponent	GS	FG	3FG	FT	O-D-R	PF	TP	A	TO	B	S	MP
at Long Beach St.	0-2	0-2	0-0	1-0-1	2	0	1	1	0	1	7	
at Gonzaga	0-0	0-0	0-0	1-0-1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	
vs. Green Bay	0-1	0-1	2-2	0-1-1	1	2	0	1	0	0	6	
vs. IUPUI	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	1	0	0	7	
at Miami (Ohio)	0-1	0-0	2-2	0-0-0	1	2	0	0	0	0	9	
San Diego Christian	3-4	1-2	0-0	1-2-3	2	7	0	1	0	0	18	
Saint Mary's	Did Not Play - CD											
Wichita St.	3-4	0-1	0-0	2-0-2	0	6	0	0	0	0	5	
at California	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	
San Diego	1-2	0-1	0-0	0-0-0	2	2	0	0	1	0	12	
Cal Poly	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
UC Santa Barbara	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
vs. San Francisco	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. IUPUI	Did Not Play - CD											
Occidental	1-3	0-2	0-0	1-2-3	3	2	2	1	0	1	24	
at TCU*	0-3	0-1	0-0	2-0-2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	
at Utah*	Did Not Play - CD											
UNLV*	Did Not Play - CD											
at New Mexico*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Air Force*	Did Not Play - CD											
at Brigham Young*	Did Not Play - CD											
Wyoming*	3-6	2-5	0-1	0-3-3	2	8	1	1	1	1	15	
at Colorado St.*	0-1	0-1	0-0	0-1-1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	
TCU*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Utah*	1-2	0-0	0-0	1-0-1	1	2	0	0	0	0	7	
at UNLV*	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
New Mexico*	Did Not Play - CD											
at Air Force*	Did Not Play - CD											
Brigham Young*	Did Not Play - CD											
at Wyoming*	1-2	0-1	3-3	0-1-1	3	5	0	0	0	0	10	
Colorado St.*	1-2	0-0	0-0	1-0-1	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	
vs. Utah	Did Not Play - CD											
at UNLV	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Brigham Young	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Northern Colorado	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Temple	Did Not Play - CD											
vs. Connecticut	Did Not Play - CD											

### ▶ Cheriet Career Statistics

Year	G-GS	Min.-Avg.	FG-FGA	Pct.	3P-3PA	Pct.	FT-FTA	Pct.	OR	DR	Reb	Avg.	PF-D	AT	TO	BS	ST	Pts.	Avg.
08-09	35-2	494-14.1	62-130	.477	14-47	.298	23-35	.657	29	47	76	2.2	59-3	21	22	9	8	161	4.6
10-11	21-0	150-7.1	14-36	.389	3-19	.158	7-8	.875	10	10	20	1.0	24-0	4	8	4	3	38	1.8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>56-2</b>	<b>644-11.5</b>	<b>76-166</b>	<b>.458</b>	<b>17-66</b>	<b>.258</b>	<b>30-43</b>	<b>.698</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>83-3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>3.6</b>



# Game 1

#25/- San Diego State 81  
Long Beach State 65

Nov. 13, 2010 ♦ Long Beach, Calif.  
Walter Pyramid ♦ Att.: 5,143

LONG BEACH, Calif. - No. 25 San Diego State went on the road and defeated Long Beach State, 81-65, to open the 2010-11 season before a Walter Pyramid-record 5,143 fans.

The Aztecs used three consecutive three-pointers from sophomore newcomer James Rahon with just over nine minutes to play in the second half to pull away from the 49ers.

San Diego State was nursing a 56-55 lead in a back-and-forth affair when Rahon caught fire. The guard knocked his first three-pointer with 9:01 left in regulation and his teammates found him on the next two trips and were rewarded with two more threes, the last of which gave the Aztecs a 65-55 cushion with 6:49 remaining.

Long Beach State tried to rally and used an 8-1 run after Rahon's third three-point field goal to cut the lead to four, but the nationally ranked Aztecs proved to be too much down the stretch and emerged with the decision.

In the first half, the 49ers raced to a 16-9 lead in the first seven minutes of the game. The Aztecs, however, hung around and eventually took an eight-point lead with 3:51 left before the half. Then in the final two minutes, LBSU closed the half on a 7-0 run and forced the Aztecs into three missed three-point field goals and a turnover as the frame ended in a 42-42 tie.

Kawhi Leonard led all players with 21 points and 12 rebounds, all of which came in the second half. In comparison, the 49ers only had 16 rebounds themselves in the second period. D.J. Gay added 20 points, while Rahon finished with 14 points off the bench. Malcolm Thomas ended with 10 boards and a career-high matching six assists.

SDSU	MP	FG	3FG	FT	R	F	A TO	B	S	TP
Thomas	*31	4-10	0-1	1-2	10	3	6 3	1	0	9
Leonard	*37	9-17	0-3	3-3	12	2	3 1	1	2	21
White	*26	3-5	0-0	0-0	6	3	3 1	1	2	6
Tapley	*18	5-7	1-3	0-0	2	1	1 1	0	0	11
Gay	*37	7-11	4-5	2-2	3	2	3 4	0	0	20
Franklin, L.	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0
Carlwell	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0 0	0	0	0
Shelton	13	0-5	0-4	0-0	2	1	1 1	0	1	0
Rahon	27	5-8	4-7	0-0	4	2	0 0	0	0	14
Cheriet	7	0-2	0-2	0-0	1	2	1 1	0	1	0
Team					3					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>33-65</b>	<b>9-25</b>	<b>6-7</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18 12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>81</b>

LBSU	MP	FG	3FG	FT	R	F	A TO	B	S	TP
Phelps	*36	2-7	0-1	5-8	6	0	0 1	0	0	9
Robinson	*35	8-16	1-2	2-2	9	4	1 2	0	1	19
Plater	*33	4-13	2-11	0-0	4	1	4 0	0	0	10
Anderson	*37	1-8	1-5	3-6	4	3	4 2	0	2	6
Ware	*34	7-14	1-3	0-1	5	0	2 4	0	3	15
Wilson	16	2-6	0-1	2-2	4	2	0 0	0	0	6
Dervisevic	9	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0 0	0	0	0
Team					2					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>24-64</b>	<b>5-23</b>	<b>12-19</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11 9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>65</b>

Halftime: San Diego State 42, Long Beach State 42. FG%: San Diego State 50.8, Long Beach State 37.5. 3FG%: San Diego State 36.0, Long Beach State 21.7. FT%: San Diego State 85.7, Long Beach State 63.2. Officials: David Hall, Randy McCall, Rick Batsell. Technicals: None.



# Game 2

#25/- San Diego State 79  
#11/12 Gonzaga 76

Nov. 16, 2010 ♦ Spokane, Wash.  
McCarthy Athletic Center ♦ Att.: 6,000

SPOKANE, Wash. - No. 25 San Diego State used a career-high 30-point effort from Billy White and trailed for only a 14-second stretch early in the second half to defeat 11th/12th-ranked Gonzaga at the McCarthy Athletic Center.

The Aztecs became just the fifth team to defeat the Bulldogs in 82 games at "The Kennel." The victory snapped a 33-game road losing streak to teams ranked in the Associated Press Top 25 and marked the highest ranked team the Aztecs have defeated on the road.

San Diego State scored the first basket of the night and was able to keep the Zags at arm's length for much of the first half. The Aztec lead swelled to 10 with 6:20 remaining in the half, but the Bulldogs crept to within five, 42-37, at the halftime buzzer.

A 7-0 Gonzaga run to start the second half gave the Bulldogs a brief two-point lead, but D.J. Gay answered 11 seconds later with a three to help SDSU reclaim the lead.

Minutes later, White caught fire and scored 11 straight points in a 2 minute, 51 second span to keep GU in a seven-point hole with 9:40 left in regulation.

Gonzaga, led by Steven Gray's career-high 35 points, rallied to within one point at 77-76 with 23 seconds on the clock. Following two Kawhi Leonard free throws, Gray turned the ball over and the Zags fouled Chase Tapley, who missed the front end of a bonus situation. After securing the rebound, Gray had a chance to tie the game with a halfcourt shot, but the attempt was well short and the Aztecs emerged with the decision.

SDSU	MP	FG	3FG	FT	R	F	A TO	B	S	TP
Thomas	*19	0-3	0-0	0-0	1	5	1 2	0	1	0
Leonard	*33	7-20	0-3	4-5	12	3	3 0	1	2	18
White	*32	14-18	2-2	0-2	9	4	1 4	0	2	30
Tapley	*22	0-2	0-1	0-1	3	2	0 3	0	1	0
Gay	*38	3-7	1-3	2-4	0	1	3 3	0	1	9
Franklin, L.	0+	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0 0	0	0	0
Carlwell	14	3-7	0-2	2-3	2	2	2 0	0	1	8
Shelton	11	1-2	0-0	0-0	1	4	0 1	0	0	2
Rahon	29	5-6	2-2	0-0	4	2	2 1	0	1	12
Cheriet	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0 1	0	0	0
Team					6					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>33-65</b>	<b>5-13</b>	<b>8-15</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12 16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>79</b>

GU	MP	FG	3FG	FT	R	F	A TO	B	S	TP
Olynyk	*21	2-3	0-1	1-2	4	4	1 4	0	0	5
Harris	*31	1-4	0-0	3-5	3	2	0 0	0	1	5
Sacre	*31	4-8	0-0	5-6	11	2	0 4	1	0	13
Goodson	*31	3-9	1-4	2-3	1	1	4 0	0	1	9
Gray	*40	12-23	2-10	9-10	3	3	5 6	0	2	35
Carter	3	0-2	0-1	0-0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0
Arop	8	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	1	0 0	0	2	0
Moeninghoff	22	2-2	1-1	1-1	0	0	0 0	0	0	6
Keita	0+	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0
Hart	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	2	0 0	0	0	0
Dower	12	1-1	1-1	0-0	3	2	0 0	1	1	3
Team					3					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>25-52</b>	<b>5-18</b>	<b>21-27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10 14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>76</b>

Halftime: San Diego State 42, Gonzaga 37. FG%: San Diego State 50.8, Gonzaga 48.1. 3FG%: San Diego State 38.5, Gonzaga 27.8. FT%: Gonzaga 77.8, San Diego State 53.3. Officials: Mark Reischling, Frank Harvey, Mike Scyphers. Technicals: None.



# Game 3

#25/- San Diego State 79  
Green Bay 70

Nov. 19, 2010 ♦ Oxford, Ohio  
Millett Hall ♦ Att.: 2,117

OXFORD, Ohio - San Diego State, ranked 25th in the Associated Press Top-25 poll, overcame a sluggish start and rallied to defeat Green Bay, 79-70, at the Oxford Subregional of the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic.

The Aztecs found themselves down 22 points (28-6) with 11:15 to go in the first half before emerging with the nine-point win. The rally was the largest winning comeback of the Steve Fisher era, which is in its 12th season.

Green Bay scored the first four points of the game and used a swarming defense down low to create problems for SDSU. Couple that with the fact the Phoenix hit four of seven three-pointers and went 10-of 12 from the line in the first half resulted in the Aztecs trailing by 22 early.

With a daunting task ahead of it, San Diego State continually pounded the ball inside and fought their way back into the game. At halftime, the Aztecs trailed, 38-33.

SDSU opened the second half on an 8-0 run, all of which were scored in the paint, and took a 41-38 lead and an advantage it would not relinquish.

Down the stretch, the Phoenix cut the SDSU lead to three, but the Aztecs went on a 12-5 run to enjoy its first 10-point lead of the game with 1:52 left in regulation. Green Bay got to within 76-70 with 31 seconds left, but three Kawhi Leonard free throws iced the outcome for SDSU.

Leonard led all players with 23 points and 10 rebounds and was joined in the frontcourt by Malcolm Thomas, who finished with 12 points, eight boards and three assists. Chase Tapley, meanwhile, chipped in 14 points and three assists.

Green Bay was led by Rahmon Fletcher's 18 points.

GB	MP	FG	3FG	FT	R	F	A TO	B	S	TP
Snyder	*25	6-10	2-4	3-3	3	4	1 0	2	0	17
Brown	*19	3-5	0-0	3-4	3	5	0 2	1	0	9
Perine	*33	3-14	2-4	3-5	4	0	4 2	0	0	11
Baker	*29	3-10	1-1	2-2	6	3	2 2	0	2	9
Fletcher	*36	6-15	1-4	5-6	2	2	3 2	0	4	18
Turner	15	2-5	0-0	0-0	2	5	0 2	1	0	4
Evans	23	0-1	0-1	0-0	1	4	2 1	0	0	0
Lesage	16	1-3	0-0	0-0	4	3	0 0	0	0	2
Heuer	4	0-1	0-1	0-0	0	2	0 0	0	0	0
Team					5					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>24-64</b>	<b>6-15</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>12 11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>70</b>

SDSU	MP	FG	3FG	FT	R	F	A TO	B	S	TP
Thomas	*32	4-6	0-0	4-10	8	2	3 5	2	0	12
Leonard	*36	7-9	0-0	9-14	10	2	2 2	0	1	23
White	*19	3-7	0-1	0-0	3	3	2 2	1	0	6
Tapley	*29	6-9	0-2	2-3	0	2	3 1	0	1	14
Gay	*33	3-7	0-2	1-3	6	2	1 2	0	2	7
Franklin, L.	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0 1	0	0	0
Carlwell	8	2-3	0-0	1-2	3	1	0 0	1	0	5
Shelton	15	3-4	0-0	2-2	3	2	1 1	0	0	8
Rahon	21	1-2	0-1	0-0	1	3	0 0	0	0	2
Cheriet	6	0-1	0-1	2-2	1	1	0 1	0	0	2
Team					5					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>29-48</b>	<b>0-7</b>	<b>21-36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12 15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>79</b>

Halftime: Green Bay 38, San Diego State 33. FG%: San Diego State 60.4, Green Bay 37.5. 3FG%: Green Bay 40.0, San Diego State 00.0. FT%: Green Bay 80.0, San Diego State 58.3. Officials: Lamont Simpson, Larry Scirotto, Donnie Epley. Technicals: Team.





Game 4

#25/- San Diego State 61 IUPUI 46

Nov. 21, 2010 ♦ Oxford, Ohio Millett Hall ♦ Att.: 1,863

OXFORD, Ohio - No. 25 San Diego State overcame a slow start for a second straight game, used a suffocating defense in the second half and ultimately erased a seven-point deficit to defeat IUPUI, 61-46, in the Oxford Subregional of the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic.

The Aztecs fell behind, 11-4, in the first five minutes of the game and chipped away at the Jaguar lead before finally taking a 20-19 lead with 3:50 left in the opening half. IUPUI, however, scored the last three points of the half and carried a 23-20 lead into the locker room.

The first seven minutes of the second half was a back-and-forth affair. A long-range jumper by James Rahon and a three by Rahon on consecutive possessions kickstarted the Aztecs, which led to a 15-0 run and a 48-36 lead with 9:33 remaining.

IUPUI cut the SDSU lead to eight points with 7:31 left on the clock, but eight straight points by Billy White and two three-pointers from Kawhi Leonard, who made all four three-point attempts in the second half, helped the Aztecs run away with the 15-point win.

Leonard finished with a game-high 20 points and 10 rebounds to post his fourth double-double in as many games this season. The sophomore, who entered the game 0-for-6 from three-point distance for the season, went 4-for-5 from behind the arc. The four threes were a career best. White, meanwhile, recorded 14 points and six rebounds. Chase Tapley added nine points and a career-high tying four steals.

Alex Young and Mitchell Patton led IUPUI with 12 points apiece.

Table with 12 columns: Player, MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP. Rows include SDSU players (Thomas, Leonard, White, Tapley, Gay, Franklin, L., Carlwell, Shelton, Rahon, Franklin, J., Cheriet, Team) and Totals.

Table with 12 columns: Player, MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP. Rows include IUPUI players (Young, Patton, Nobles, Thomas, Ashworth, Rice, Kitcoff, Gibbs, Siakam, Team) and Totals.

Halftime: IUPUI 23, San Diego State 20. FG%: San Diego State 50.0, IUPUI 41.7. 3FG%: San Diego State 41.2, IUPUI 38.5. FT%: San Diego State 100.0, IUPUI 73.3. Officials: Terry Wymer, Bo Boroski, Bill Ek. Technicals: None.



Game 5

#18/22 San Diego State 77 Miami (Ohio) 56

Nov. 22, 2010 ♦ Oxford, Ohio Millett Hall ♦ Att.: 1,858

OXFORD, Ohio - San Diego State, sporting a new No. 18 AP ranking and debuting at No. 22 in the USA Today/ESPN Coaches' poll for the first time in school history, used a pair of stifling runs to defeat Miami (Ohio) on its homecourt, 77-56, in the final game of the CBE Classic Oxford Subregional.

For the third time in three games, the Aztecs faced a first-half deficit, this time a 17-6 hole not even seven minutes into the contest. But like the first two games in Oxford, SDSU battled back by scoring 16 unanswered points and ultimately went on a 25-2 run to take a 39-34 lead into halftime.

After Miami (Ohio) scored the first five points of the second period to knot the score at 39, San Diego State proceeded to go on a 25-0 run to put the game out of reach. During its scoring spree, SDSU held the RedHawks off the scorebook for 12 minutes, 35 seconds. The Aztecs' lead eventually swelled to 28 points before they settled for the 21-point victory.

D.J. Gay led all players with 19 points and four assists, while backcourt teammate James Rahon came off the bench to contribute 15 points and a career-high three steals. In the frontcourt, Kawhi Leonard had 12 points, 13 rebounds and four assists, and Malcolm Thomas added 16 points and six rebounds.

At the conclusion of the game, Thomas was named to the all-tournament team and Leonard was named the subregional's most valuable player.

Table with 12 columns: Player, MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP. Rows include SDSU players (Thomas, Leonard, White, Tapley, Gay, Franklin, L., Carlwell, Shelton, Rahon, Franklin, J., Cheriet, Team) and Totals.

Table with 12 columns: Player, MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP. Rows include MU players (Mavunga, Winbush, Ballard, Rollins, Williams, Sewell, Roberts, Mock, McHenry, Harris, Thomas, McGhee, Legarza, Team) and Totals.

Halftime: San Diego State 39, Miami (Ohio) 34. FG%: San Diego State 50.0, Miami (Ohio) 36.7. 3FG%: San Diego State 43.8, Miami (Ohio) 38.1. FT%: Miami (Ohio) 80.0, San Diego State 77.8. Officials: Terry Wymer, Lamont Simpson, Donnie Eppley. Technicals: Miami - Team.



Game 6

#18/22 San Diego State 88 San Diego Christian 69

Nov. 26, 2010 ♦ San Diego, Calif. Viejas Arena ♦ Att.: 5,674

SAN DIEGO - Following six straight games away from Viejas Arena to start the season, San Diego State returned home and defeated San Diego Christian, 88-69, on a night the school unveiled its 2010 Mountain West Conference tournament championship banner.

The victory was the sixth straight in as many games this season for SDSU and the 16th consecutive at home vs. non-conference foes, which tied the school record.

The Aztecs struck first with a layup by Malcolm Thomas and the tone for the night was set as San Diego State never looked back and ended up scoring 60 of its 88 points in the painted area.

Despite being outscored by 40 in the paint, San Diego Christian was up to the task against the nationally ranked Aztecs. The Hawks trailed by one with 7:19 to play in the first half and were behind 29-25 as late as 5:28 remaining the opening period before SDSU closed with a 15-9 run to take a 44-34 lead at halftime.

SDCC got as close nine in the opening minutes of the second half, but San Diego State scored eight straight points in the paint to extend its lead to 17 (54-37) and cruised to victory.

Eleven Aztecs saw action and all 11 scored. Sophomore Kawhi Leonard and Chase Tapley each scored 14 points apiece to lead San Diego State, and Billy White contributed 10. The trio combined to shoot 17-27 from the floor on an evening where SDSU shot 60.3 percent from the field.

Aaron Felix led all players with 21 points and Tyler Mutton added 19 for the Hawks.

Table with 12 columns: Player, MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP. Rows include SDSU players (Sanders, Asaciovas, Patterson, Felix, Mutton, Spoelstra, Bartz, Starr, Mylleville, Koenig, Team) and Totals.

Table with 12 columns: Player, MP, FG, 3FG, FT, R, F, A TO, B, S, TP. Rows include SDSU players (Thomas, Leonard, White, Tapley, Gay, Williams, Franklin, L., Carlwell, Rahon, Franklin, J., Cheriet, Team) and Totals.

Halftime: San Diego State 44, San Diego Christian 34. FG%: San Diego State 60.3, San Diego Christian 42.4. 3FG%: San Diego State 53.3, San Diego Christian 35.7. FT%: San Diego Christian 100.0, San Diego State 44.4. Officials: Bill Gracey, Frank Harvey III, Chris Rastatter. Technicals: Team.































# San Diego State Career Records

5.	♦Billy White	08-09-10-11	133	148
6.	Tony Gwynn	78-79-80-81	107	141
7.	♦Kyle Spain	06-07-08-09	115	137
8.	Eddie Morris	80-81-82-83	105	131
9.	Matt Watts	98-99	53	126
9.	Michael Best	89-90	56	126
9.	Michael Cage	81-82-83-84	112	126
12.	♦Lorenzo Wade	07-08-09	92	125
13.	♦D.J. Gay	08-09-10-11	139	124
14.	♦Deandre Moore	01-02-03	88	114
15.	Eddy Gordon	80-81-82-83	107	111
16.	Creon Dorsey	85-86	59	109
17.	♦Marcus Slaughter	04-05-06	87	107
18.	♦Marcelo Correa	97-98-99-00-01	112	102
19.	♦Matt Thomas	05-06-07-08-09	124	100
20.	♦Kawhi Leonard	10-11	69	98

## Games Played

Rk	DI	Name	Years	GP
1.	1.	♦D.J. Gay	08-09-10-11	139
2.	2.	♦Billy White	08-09-10-11	133
3.	3.	♦Richie Williams	06-07-08-09	127
4.	4.	♦Brandon Heath	04-05-06-07	125
5.	5.	♦Matt Thomas	05-06-07-08-09	124
6.	6.	♦John Sharper	03-04-05-06	119
7.	7.	Leonard Allen	82-83-84-85	116
8.	8.	♦Kyle Spain	06-07-08-09	115
9.	9.	♦Myron Epps	99-00-01-02	113
9.	9.	Berry Randle	93-94-95-96	113
11.	11.	♦Marcelo Correa	97-98-99-00-01	112
11.	11.	Chad Nelson	94-95-96-97	112
11.	11.	Michael Cage	81-82-83-84	112
14.	14.	♦Chris Walton	01-02-04-05	110
14.	14.	Anthony Watson	83-84-85-86	110
16.	16.	♦Aerick Sanders	01-02-03-04	109
16.	16.	Mark Delsman	74-75-76-77	109
18.	18.	Eddy Gordon	80-81-82-83	107
18.	18.	Tony Gwynn	78-79-80-81	107
18.	-	Noel Mickelsen	53-54-55-56	107

## Games Started

<i>since 1978-79</i>				
Rk	Name	Years	GP	GS
1.	♦Billy White	08-09-10-11	133	123
2.	♦Brandon Heath	04-05-06-07	125	120
3.	♦D.J. Gay	08-09-10-11	139	119
4.	Michael Cage	81-82-83-84	112	112
5.	Leonard Allen	82-83-84-85	116	110
6.	♦Richie Williams	06-07-08-09	127	109
7.	Chad Nelson	94-95-96-97	112	103
8.	♦Kyle Spain	06-07-08-09	115	95
9.	Anthony Watson	83-84-85-86	110	93
10.	♦Marcelo Correa	97-98-99-00-01	112	91
11.	♦Myron Epps	99-00-01-02	113	81
12.	♦Marcus Slaughter	04-05-06	87	74
13.	♦Lorenzo Wade	07-08-09	92	73
13.	♦Deandre Moore	01-02-03	88	73
15.	♦Malcolm Thomas	10-11	70	69
16.	♦Kawhi Leonard	10-11	69	68
17.	♦Tony Bland	02-03	63	62
17.	Joe McNaull	91-92-93	86	62
17.	Eddie Morris	80-81-82-83	105	62
20.	♦Randy Holcomb	01-02	61	61
20.	Tony Gwynn	78-79-80-81	107	61
20.	Eddy Gordon	80-81-82-83	107	61

## Consecutive Games Started

<i>since 1980-81 season</i>				
Rk	Name	Years	GP	CGS
1.	Michael Cage	81-82-83-84	112	112
2.	Chad Nelson	94-95-96-97	112	103

3.	♦Brandon Heath	04-05-06-07	125	85
4.	Leonard Allen	82-83-84-85	116	70
5.	♦D.J. Gay	08-09-10-11	139	70
6.	♦Malcolm Thomas	10-11	70	67
7.	♦Kawhi Leonard	10-11	69	63
8.	♦Randy Holcomb	01-02	61	61
9.	♦Aerick Sanders	01-02-03-04	109	60
10.	♦Myron Epps	99-00-01-02	113	58
11.	Chris Walters	1993-94	57	57
11.	Joe McNaull	91-92-93	86	57
13.	Kevin Betts	97-98	55	55
13.	Anthony Watson	83-84-85-86	110	55

## Minutes Played

<i>since 1978-79 season</i>				
Rk	Name	Years	GP	Min.
1.	♦Brandon Heath	04-05-06-07	125	4,275
2.	Michael Cage	81-82-83-84	112	4,262
3.	♦D.J. Gay	08-09-10-11	139	4,187
4.	♦Richie Williams	06-07-08-09	127	3,780
5.	Chad Nelson	94-95-96-97	103	3,692
6.	♦Billy White	08-09-10-11	133	3,493
7.	Anthony Watson	83-84-85-86	110	3,330
8.	Leonard Allen	82-83-84-85	116	3,191
9.	♦Myron Epps	99-00-01-02	113	2,971
10.	♦Kyle Spain	06-07-08-09	115	2,948
11.	♦Lorenzo Wade	07-08-09	92	2,911
12.	♦Marcus Slaughter	04-05-06	87	2,659
13.	Eddie Morris	80-81-82-83	105	2,627
14.	♦Marcelo Correa	97-98-99-00-01	112	2,594
15.	♦Deandre Moore	01-02-03	88	2,462
16.	♦Aerick Sanders	01-02-03-04	109	2,460
17.	Tony Gwynn	78-79-80-81	107	+2,422
18.	Tony Ross	87-88-89	85	2,402
19.	♦John Sharper	03-04-05-06	119	2,381
20.	♦Chris Walton	01-02-04-05	110	2,286
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	♦Kawhi Leonard	10-11	69	2,207
	♦Malcolm Thomas	10-11	70	2,156



# 2010-11 San Diego State Schedule/Results

**Record: 34-2 (Home: 14-1, Away: 12-1, Neutral: 8-0)**  
**Mountain West Conference: 14-2 (Home: 7-1, Away: 7-1)**

SDSU		San Diego State High									
Date	NR	Opponent	SDSU Result	W-L	Record	MWC	Scorer	Rebounder	Assists	Attendance	
Nov. 13	25/rv	at Long Beach State	W	81-65	W1	1-0	Leonard - 21	Leonard - 12	Thomas - 6	5,143 (c)	
Nov. 16	25/rv	#at (11/12) Gonzaga	W	79-76	W2	2-0	White - 30	Leonard - 12	Gay, Leonard - 3	6,000 (c)	
Nov. 20	25/rv	~vs. Green Bay	W	79-70	W3	3-0	Leonard - 23	Leonard - 10	Tapley, Thomas - 3	2,117	
Nov. 21	25/rv	~vs. IUPUI	W	61-46	W4	4-0	Leonard - 20	Leonard - 10	Gay - 4	1,863	
Nov. 22	18/22	~at Miami (Ohio)	W	77-56	W5	5-0	Gay - 19	Leonard - 13	Gay, Leonard - 4	1,858	
Nov. 26	18/22	SAN DIEGO CHRISTIAN	W	88-69	W6	6-0	Leonard, Tapley - 14	Thomas - 8	L. Franklin - 6	5,674	
Dec. 1	17/19	(rv/rv) SAINT MARY'S	W	69-55	W7	7-0	Tapley - 14	Leonard - 8	White - 4	12,414 (c)	
Dec. 4	17/19	(-rv) WICHITA STATE	W	83-69	W8	8-0	White - 24	Leonard - 12	Gay - 6	12,414 (c)	
Dec. 8	14/15	at California	W	77-57	W9	9-0	Leonard - 20	Tapley - 7	Thomas, White - 4	9,426	
Dec. 11	14/15	SAN DIEGO	W	77-49	W10	10-0	Thomas - 20	Leonard - 13	Gay, Leonard - 4	12,414 (c)	
Dec. 13	11/10	CAL POLY	W	51-45	W11	11-0	Thomas - 18	Thomas - 15	Thomas - 3	7,971	
Dec. 18	11/10	UC SANTA BARBARA	W	90-64	W12	12-0	Thomas - 18	Thomas - 10	Tapley - 5	12,414 (c)	
Dec. 21	7/7	\$vs. San Francisco	W	62-56	W13	13-0	Leonard - 23	Leonard - 14	Gay - 3	1,202	
Dec. 22	7/7	\$vs. IUPUI	W	56-54	W14	14-0	Gay - 18	Thomas - 9	Tapley - 5	1,095	
Dec. 31	7/7	OCCIDENTAL	W	93-50	W15	15-0	Rahon, Tapley - 15	Leonard - 10	Leonard, Tapley - 4	12,414 (c)	
Jan. 5	6/6	*at TCU	W	66-53	W16	16-0	1-0 Thomas - 18	Leonard - 11	Gay - 6	4,287	
Jan. 8	6/6	*at Utah	W	71-62	W17	17-0	2-0 Leonard - 20	Thomas - 14	Gay, White - 3	8,571	
Jan. 12	6/6	*(rv/rv) UNLV	W	55-49	W18	18-0	3-0 Leonard - 15	Leonard - 17	Leonard - 4	12,414 (c)	
Jan. 15	6/6	*at New Mexico	W	87-77	W19	19-0	4-0 Gay - 30	Leonard - 15	Gay, Leonard - 4	15,411 (c)	
Jan. 19	6/6	*AIR FORCE	W	68-55	W20	20-0	5-0 Gay - 20	Leonard - 10	Gay, Tapley, Thomas - 3	12,414 (c)	
Jan. 26	4/4	*at (9/9) Brigham Young	L	58-71	L1	20-1	5-1 Leonard - 22	Leonard - 15	Gay - 4	22,700 (c)	
Jan. 29	4/4	*WYOMING	W	96-57	W1	21-1	6-1 Tapley - 24	Carlwell - 10	Leonard - 4	12,414 (c)	
Feb. 2	7/6	*at (rv/-) Colorado State (:01.8)	W	56-54	W2	22-1	7-1 Rahon - 15	Leonard - 15	Gay, Leonard - 4	7,353	
Feb. 5	7/6	*TCU	W	60-53	W3	23-1	8-1 White - 19	Thomas - 14	Gay - 6	12,414 (c)	
Feb. 8	6/6	*UTAH	W	85-53	W4	24-1	9-1 Gay, White - 15	Leonard - 14	Gay - 6	12,414 (c)	
Feb. 12	6/6	*at UNLV	W	63-57	W5	25-1	10-1 Gay - 20	Leonard - 10	Gay - 3	18,557 (c)	
Feb. 16	6/6	*NEW MEXICO	W	68-62	W6	26-1	11-1 Leonard, Thomas - 22	Leonard - 9	Gay, Leonard - 3	12,414 (c)	
Feb. 19	6/6	*at Air Force	W	70-58	W7	27-1	12-1 Thomas - 20	Leonard - 15	Gay - 5	3,463	
Feb. 26	6/4	*(7/7) BRIGHAM YOUNG	L	67-80	L1	27-2	12-2 Leonard - 17	Leonard - 13	Leonard - 4	12,414 (c)	
Mar. 1	9/9	*at Wyoming	W	85-58	W1	28-2	13-2 Carlwell, Thomas - 15	Thomas - 11	Gay - 3	4,518	
Mar. 5	9/9	*COLORADO STATE	W	66-48	W2	29-2	14-2 Leonard - 17	Leonard - 12	four with - 2	12,414 (c)	
Mar. 10	7/6	`vs. [7] Utah (QF)	W	64-50	W3	30-2	Leonard, Thomas - 13	Leonard - 12	Thomas - 8	12,325	
Mar. 11	7/6	`at [3] UNLV (SF) (:04.9)	W	74-72	W4	31-2	Leonard - 18	Leonard, Thomas - 8	Thomas - 5	18,500 (c)	
Mar. 12	7/6	`vs. (8/8) [1] Brigham Young (CH)	W	72-54	W5	32-2	White - 21	White - 12	Thomas - 3	18,500 (c)	
Mar. 17	6/5	^vs. [15] No. Colorado (2R)	W	68-50	W6	33-2	Leonard - 21	White - 13	Gay, Tapley - 3	10,101	
Mar. 19	6/5	^vs. [7] Temple (3R)	W-2ot	71-64	W7	34-2	Leonard, White - 16	White - 13	Gay - 5	11,127	
Mar. 24	6/5	+vs. (9/8) [3] Connecticut (S16)									

Caps denotes home game. # - O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic. ~ - O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic (Oxford, Ohio). \$ - Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic (Las Vegas, Nev.). \* - Mountain West Conference Game. ` - Conoco Mountain West Conference Championships (Thomas & Mack Center; Las Vegas, Nev.). ^ - NCAA Tournament (Tucson, Ariz.). c - Indicates capacity crowd. SDSU NR - San Diego State national ranking (*Associated Press* and *ESPN/USA Today* coaches polls at gametime). Time to the right of opponent name indicates time remaining on a game-winning shot.

## Record/Attendance Summary

	G	W-L	Total	Average	High
Home	15	14-1	175,027	11,668	12,414 - 13 times
Mountain West	8	7-1	99,312	12,414	12,414 - eight times
Away	13	12-1	125,787	9,676	22,700 at Brigham Young (Jan. 26)
Mountain West	8	7-1	84,860	10,608	22,700 at Brigham Young (Jan. 26)
Neutral	8	8-0	58,330	7,291	18,500 vs. Brigham Young (18,500)
Total	36	34-2	359,144	9,976	22,700 at Brigham Young (Jan. 26)
Mountain West	16	14-2	184,172	11,511	22,700 at Brigham Young (Jan. 26)

## Win/Loss Margin

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	13	14	15	16	18	19	20	21	26	27	28	32	39	43	=<3	=<5	=<10
Win		3	1			5	2		2	1	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Loss																												2

# 2010-11 San Diego State Season Stats

**Record: 34-2 (Home: 14-1, Away: 12-1, Neutral: 8-0)**

No.	Player	GPGS	Min	Avg	TOTAL		3-PTS		FT-FTA		REBOUNDS				PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg		
					FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	Pct	Pct	Off	Def	Tot	Avg										
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	34	34	1097	32.3	201-449	.448	24-81	.296	103-137	.752	109	253	362	10.6	82	2	84	70	21	49	529	15.6	
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	35	35	1143	32.7	206-463	.445	24-82	.293	109-143	.762	110	261	371	10.6	85	2	87	74	21	51	545	15.6	
04	THOMAS, Malcolm	36	36	1093	30.4	152-284	.535	2-12	.167	103-158	.652	106	187	293	8.1	82	1	81	77	75	18	409	11.4	
23	GAY, D.J.	36	36	1267	35.2	132-352	.375	69-195	.354	63-92	.685	9	68	77	2.1	29	0	116	44	2	37	396	11.0	
32	WHITE, Billy	35	35	918	26.2	144-259	.556	9-26	.346	58-78	.744	66	87	153	4.4	101	3	55	58	27	37	355	10.1	
22	TAPLEY, Chase	33	30	835	25.3	111-223	.498	40-101	.396	24-29	.828	20	59	79	2.4	42	0	62	43	7	44	286	8.7	
11	RAHON, James	36	6	782	21.7	89-207	.430	52-120	.433	27-39	.692	14	43	57	1.6	54	1	28	18	1	15	257	7.1	
05	CARLWELL, Brian	36	1	415	11.5	53-102	.520	3-9	.333	28-45	.622	44	54	98	2.7	44	1	8	24	25	6	137	3.8	
21	FRANKLIN, Jamaal	21	0	172	8.2	23-47	.489	7-21	.333	9-17	.529	13	26	39	1.9	16	0	9	13	5	3	62	3.0	
10	SHELTON, Tim	30	0	291	9.7	21-56	.375	4-17	.235	5-11	.455	13	34	47	1.6	34	0	12	9	1	6	51	1.7	
42	CHERIET, Mehdi	21	0	150	7.1	14-36	.389	3-19	.158	7-8	.875	10	10	20	1.0	24	0	4	8	4	3	38	1.8	
03	FRANKLIN, LaBradford	17	1	135	7.9	11-27	.407	2-10	.200	12-15	.800	1	14	15	0.9	12	0	23	17	0	3	36	2.1	
00	WILLIAMS, Alec	10	0	49	4.9	8-21	.381	1-5	.200	4-5	.800	6	8	14	1.4	5	0	0	1	1	0	21	2.1	
TEAM											45	51	96	2.8	0								7	
SDSU TOTALS		36					964-2077	.464	216-617	.350	449-640	.702	457	902	1359	37.8	528	8	485	393	169	223	2593	72.0
OPPONENTS		36					775-1970	.393	186-592	.314	382-531	.719	372	739	1111	30.9	603	-	389	452	97	181	2118	58.8

SCORE BY PERIODS:	1st	2nd	OT	2OT	Total
SAN DIEGO STATE	1,259	1,317	7	10	-2,593
OPPONENTS	1,024	1,084	7	3	-2,118

**Mountain West Conference: 14-2 (Home: 7-1, Away: 7-1)**

No.	Player	GPGS	Min	Avg	TOTAL		3-PTS		FT-FTA		REBOUNDS				PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg		
					FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	Pct	Pct	Off	Def	Tot	Avg										
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	16	16	526	32.9	83-210	.395	5-27	.185	66-86	.767	59	131	190	11.9	39	2	42	39	10	24	237	14.8	
23	GAY, D.J.	16	16	582	36.4	61-175	.349	32-96	.333	31-50	.620	3	32	35	2.2	13	0	58	15	0	24	185	11.6	
04	THOMAS, Malcolm	16	16	502	31.4	67-134	.500	2-10	.200	47-70	.671	51	98	149	9.3	34	0	30	35	37	6	183	11.4	
32	WHITE, Billy	16	16	410	25.6	52-95	.547	5-13	.385	27-37	.730	18	33	51	3.2	50	2	23	28	14	8	136	8.5	
22	TAPLEY, Chase	14	12	343	24.5	44-98	.449	19-52	.365	16-17	.941	5	23	28	2.0	18	0	23	15	3	13	123	8.8	
11	RAHON, James	16	4	366	22.9	35-93	.376	24-59	.407	13-20	.650	6	19	25	1.6	25	0	12	11	1	4	107	6.7	
05	CARLWELL, Brian	16	0	191	11.9	28-51	.549	1-4	.250	12-19	.632	29	30	59	3.7	28	1	3	10	14	3	69	4.3	
21	FRANKLIN, Jamaal	9	0	81	9.0	10-22	.455	3-10	.300	7-10	.700	6	18	24	2.7	6	0	6	6	1	1	30	3.3	
10	SHELTON, Tim	13	0	118	9.1	8-18	.444	2-5	.400	1-4	.250	5	11	16	1.2	15	0	6	1	0	3	19	1.5	
42	CHERIET, Mehdi	9	0	49	5.4	6-16	.375	2-8	.250	3-4	.750	4	5	9	1.0	11	0	1	2	1	1	17	1.9	
03	FRANKLIN, LaBradford	3	0	18	6.0	3-5	.600	1-2	.500	1-2	.500	0	4	4	1.3	2	0	3	2	0	0	8	2.7	
00	WILLIAMS, Alec	3	0	14	4.7	3-8	.375	0-0	.000	1-2	.500	3	2	5	1.7	2	0	0	1	0	0	7	2.3	
TEAM											24	18	42	2.6	0								4	
SDSU TOTALS		16					400-925	.432	96-286	.336	225-321	.701	213	424	637	39.8	243	5	207	169	81	87	1121	70.1
OPPONENTS		16					346-886	.391	70-246	.285	185-267	.693	160	358	518	32.4	289	-	176	181	60	81	947	59.2

SCORE BY PERIODS:	1st	2nd	OT	2OT	Total
SAN DIEGO STATE	547	574			-1,121
OPPONENTS	439	508			-947

# 2010-11 San Diego State - Home/Away Stats

## Home: 14-1

No.	Player	GPGS	Min	Avg	TOTAL		3-PTS		FT-FTA		REBOUNDS		PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg									
					FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	Pct	Pct	Off	Def									Tot	Avg							
04	THOMAS, Malcolm	15	15	437	29.1	65-109	.596	1-5	.200	54-80	.675	49	85	134	8.9	24	0	33	29	40	8	185	12.3						
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	14	14	439	31.4	68-175	.389	5-28	.179	41-53	.774	36	111	147	10.5	29	1	39	17	9	23	182	13.0						
23	GAY, D.J.	15	15	497	33.1	51-139	.367	30-81	.370	25-33	.758	1	22	23	1.5	10	0	50	15	0	19	157	10.5						
32	WHITE, Billy	14	14	350	25.0	60-89	.674	5-8	.625	29-39	.744	19	32	51	3.6	38	2	18	16	12	10	154	11.0						
22	TAPLEY, Chase	13	11	304	23.4	49-93	.527	19-41	.463	6-6	1.000	8	16	24	1.8	13	0	23	16	3	18	123	9.5						
11	RAHON, James	15	4	337	22.5	37-94	.394	22-52	.423	16-23	.696	7	14	21	1.4	19	0	15	9	0	5	112	7.5						
05	CARLWELL, Brian	15	1	197	13.1	30-55	.545	3-5	.600	15-26	.577	26	25	51	3.4	19	1	3	11	16	3	78	5.2						
21	FRANKLIN, Jamaal	9	0	96	10.7	14-25	.560	3-9	.333	6-13	.462	11	17	28	3.1	7	0	6	6	4	1	37	4.1						
03	FRANKLIN, LaBradford	9	1	109	12.1	9-23	.391	2-9	.222	9-12	.750	1	13	14	1.6	10	0	20	13	0	3	29	3.2						
42	CHERIET, Mehdi	10	0	93	9.3	13-24	.542	3-12	.250	0-1	.000	6	7	13	1.3	11	0	3	4	2	2	29	2.9						
00	WILLIAMS, Alec	6	0	39	6.5	6-17	.353	0-2	.000	4-5	.800	6	7	13	2.2	3	0	0	1	1	0	16	2.7						
10	SHELTON, Tim	12	0	102	8.5	5-20	.250	1-5	.200	3-5	.600	6	11	17	1.4	11	0	4	2	0	1	14	1.2						
TEAM												15	17	32	2.3	0			2										
SDSU TOTALS		15			407-863	.472	94-257	.366	208-296	.703	191	377	568	37.9	194	4	214	141	87	93	1116	74.4							
OPPONENTS		15			327-831	.394	89-252	.353	115-161	.714	146	292	438	29.2	270	-	173	191	42	74	858	57.2							

SCORE BY PERIODS:	1st	2nd	OT	2OT	Total
SAN DIEGO STATE	551	565			- 1,116
OPPONENTS	402	456			- 858

## Road/Neutral: 20-1 (Away: 12-1, Neutral 8-0)

No.	Player	GPGS	Min	Avg	TOTAL		3-PTS		FT-FTA		REBOUNDS		PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg									
					FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	Pct	Pct	Off	Def									Tot	Avg							
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	21	21	704	33.5	138-288	.479	19-54	.352	68-90	.756	74	150	224	10.7	56	1	48	57	12	28	363	17.3						
23	GAY, D.J.	21	21	770	36.7	81-213	.380	39-114	.342	38-59	.644	8	46	54	2.6	19	0	66	29	2	18	239	11.4						
04	THOMAS, Malcolm	21	21	656	31.2	87-175	.497	1-7	.143	49-78	.628	57	102	159	7.6	58	1	48	48	35	10	224	10.7						
32	WHITE, Billy	21	21	568	27.0	84-170	.494	4-18	.222	29-39	.744	47	55	102	4.9	63	1	37	42	15	27	201	9.6						
22	TAPLEY, Chase	20	19	531	26.6	62-130	.477	21-60	.350	18-23	.783	12	43	55	2.8	29	0	39	27	4	26	163	8.2						
11	RAHON, James	21	2	445	21.2	52-113	.460	30-68	.441	11-16	.688	7	29	36	1.7	35	1	13	9	1	10	145	6.9						
05	CARLWELL, Brian	21	0	218	10.4	23-47	.489	0-4	.000	13-19	.684	18	29	47	2.2	25	0	5	13	9	3	59	2.8						
10	SHELTON, Tim	18	0	189	10.5	16-36	.444	3-12	.250	2-6	.333	7	23	30	1.7	23	0	8	7	1	5	37	2.1						
21	FRANKLIN, Jamaal	12	0	76	6.3	9-22	.409	4-12	.333	3-4	.750	2	9	11	0.9	9	0	3	7	1	2	25	2.1						
42	CHERIET, Mehdi	11	0	57	5.2	1-12	.083	0-7	.000	7-7	1.000	4	3	7	0.6	13	0	1	4	2	1	9	0.8						
03	FRANKLIN, LaBradford	8	0	26	3.3	2-4	.500	0-1	.000	3-3	1.000	0	1	1	0.1	2	0	3	4	0	0	7	0.9						
00	WILLIAMS, Alec	4	0	10	2.5	2-4	.500	1-3	.333	0-0	.000	0	1	1	0.3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	1.3						
TEAM												30	34	64	3.2	0			5										
SDSU TOTALS		21			557-1214	.459	122-360	.339	241-344	.701	266	525	791	37.7	334	4	271	252	82	130	1477	70.3							
OPPONENTS		21			448-1139	.393	97-340	.285	267-370	.722	226	447	673	32.0	333	-	216	261	55	107	1260	60.0							

SCORE BY PERIODS:	1st	2nd	OT	2OT	Total
SAN DIEGO STATE	708	752	7	10	- 1,477
OPPONENTS	622	628	7	3	- 1,260

# 2010-11 San Diego State - Win/Loss Stats

## Wins: 34

No.	Player	GPGS	Min	Avg	TOTAL		3-PTS		FT-FTA		REBOUNDS		PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg			
					FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	Pct	Pct	Off	Def									Tot	Avg	
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	33	33	1073	32.5	192-429	.448	22-74	.297	100-130	.769	97	246	343	10.4	80	2	81	65	20	47	506	15.3
04	THOMAS, Malcolm	34	34	1026	30.2	145-263	.551	2-11	.182	98-151	.649	97	179	276	8.1	77	1	79	72	72	18	390	11.5
23	GAY, D.J.	34	34	1195	35.1	130-338	.385	67-185	.362	61-89	.685	8	64	72	2.1	25	0	109	43	2	35	388	11.4
32	WHITE, Billy	33	33	858	26.0	136-241	.564	9-24	.375	58-74	.784	63	82	145	4.4	93	2	51	55	25	35	339	10.3
22	TAPLEY, Chase	31	28	780	25.2	104-205	.507	37-91	.407	22-27	.815	19	56	75	2.4	39	0	60	40	7	40	267	8.6
11	RAHON, James	34	6	736	21.6	83-194	.428	49-115	.426	25-37	.676	13	41	54	1.6	52	1	25	16	1	14	240	7.1
05	CARLWELL, Brian	34	1	401	11.8	51-100	.510	3-9	.333	28-45	.622	43	53	96	2.8	44	1	8	24	24	6	133	3.9
21	FRANKLIN, Jamaal	21	0	172	8.2	23-47	.489	7-21	.333	9-17	.529	13	26	39	1.9	16	0	9	13	5	3	62	3.0
10	SHELTON, Tim	28	0	275	9.8	20-51	.392	3-16	.188	5-11	.455	13	29	42	1.5	34	0	12	9	1	6	48	1.7
42	CHERIET, Mehdi	21	0	150	7.1	14-36	.389	3-19	.158	7-8	.875	10	10	20	1.0	24	0	4	8	4	3	38	1.8
03	FRANKLIN, LaBradford	17	1	135	7.9	11-27	.407	2-10	.200	12-15	.800	1	14	15	0.9	12	0	23	17	0	3	36	2.1
00	WILLIAMS, Alec	10	0	49	4.9	8-21	.381	1-5	.200	4-5	.800	6	8	14	1.4	5	0	0	1	1	0	21	2.1
TEAM												41	46	87	2.7	0			7				
SDSU TOTALS		34			917-1952		.470	205-580	.353	429-609	.704	424	854	1278	37.6	501	7	461	370	162	210	2468	72.6
OPPONENTS		34			723-1856		.390	167-553	.302	354-498	.711	355	688	1043	30.7	574	-	361	433	81	165	1967	57.9

SCORE BY PERIODS:	1st	2nd	OT	2OT	Total
SAN DIEGO STATE	1,193	1,258	7	10	- 2,468
OPPONENTS	956	1,001	7	3	- 1,967

## Losses: 2

No.	Player	GPGS	Min	Avg	TOTAL		3-PTS		FT-FTA		REBOUNDS		PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg			
					FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	Pct	Pct	Off	Def									Tot	Avg	
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	2	2	70	35.0	14-34	.412	2-8	.250	9-13	.692	13	15	28	14.0	5	0	6	9	1	4	39	19.5
04	THOMAS, Malcolm	2	2	67	33.5	7-21	.333	0-1	.000	5-7	.714	9	8	17	8.5	5	0	2	5	3	0	19	9.5
22	TAPLEY, Chase	2	2	55	27.5	7-18	.389	3-10	.300	2-2	1.000	1	3	4	2.0	3	0	2	3	0	4	19	9.5
11	RAHON, James	2	0	46	23.0	6-13	.462	3-5	.600	2-2	1.000	1	2	3	1.5	2	0	3	2	0	1	17	8.5
32	WHITE, Billy	2	2	60	30.0	8-18	.444	0-2	.000	0-4	.000	3	5	8	4.0	8	1	4	3	2	2	16	8.0
23	GAY, D.J.	2	2	72	36.0	2-14	.143	2-10	.200	2-3	.667	1	4	5	2.5	4	0	7	1	0	2	8	4.0
05	CARLWELL, Brian	2	0	14	7.0	2-2	1.000	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	1	1	2	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	2.0
10	SHELTON, Tim	2	0	16	8.0	1-5	.200	1-1	1.000	0-0	.000	0	5	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1.5
TEAM												4	5	9	4.5	0			0				
SDSU TOTALS		2			47-125		.376	11-37	.297	20-31	.645	33	48	81	40.5	27	1	24	23	7	13	125	62.5
OPPONENTS		2			52-114		.456	19-39	.487	28-33	.848	17	51	68	34.0	29	-	28	19	16	16	151	75.5

SCORE BY PERIODS:	1st	2nd	OT	2OT	Total
SAN DIEGO STATE	66	59			- 125
OPPONENTS	68	83			- 151

# 2010-11 San Diego State - Postseason Stats

## NCAA Tournament Record: 2-0 (Neutral 2-0)

No.	Player	GPGS	Min	Avg	TOTAL		3-PTS		FT-FTA		REBOUNDS		PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg			
					FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	Pct	Pct	Off	Def									Tot	Avg	
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	2	2	82	41.0	14-28	.500	3-6	.500	6-6	1.000	2	17	19	9.5	5	0	5	5	1	2	37	18.5
32	WHITE, Billy	2	2	77	38.5	13-28	.464	1-2	.500	1-2	.500	12	14	26	13.0	5	0	3	3	1	4	28	14.0
22	TAPLEY, Chase	2	2	66	33.0	9-17	.529	6-11	.545	2-3	.667	1	4	5	2.5	4	0	3	2	1	3	26	13.0
04	THOMAS, Malcolm	2	2	71	35.5	8-18	.444	0-0	.000	1-2	.500	6	7	13	6.5	4	0	4	3	5	1	17	8.5
11	RAHON, James	2	0	36	18.0	5-10	.500	3-4	.750	2-2	1.000	0	2	2	1.0	1	0	0	0	0	1	15	7.5
23	GAY, D.J.	2	2	84	42.0	5-24	.208	2-9	.222	2-2	1.000	1	9	10	5.0	0	0	8	1	1	0	14	7.0
05	CARLWELL, Brian	2	0	18	9.0	1-4	.250	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	2	3	5	2.5	2	0	1	1	2	0	2	1.0
10	SHELTON, Tim	2	0	14	7.0	0-2	.000	0-1	.000	0-0	.000	1	1	2	1.0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0.0
21	FRANKLIN, Jamaal	1	0	2	2.0	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0-0	.000	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
TEAM												3	2	5	2.5	0				1			
SDSU TOTALS		2				55-131	.420	15-33	.455	14-17	.824	28	59	87	43.5	22	0	24	17	11	11	139	69.5
OPPONENTS		2				44-122	.361	14-36	.389	12-19	.632	22	46	68	34.0	22	-	21	20	1	5	114	57.0

SCORE BY PERIODS:	1st	2nd	OT	2OT	Total
SAN DIEGO STATE	66	56	7	10	- 139
OPPONENTS	55	49	7	3	- 114

## MWC Tournament Record: 3-0 (Away: 1-0, Neutral 2-0)

No.	Player	GPGS	Min	Avg	TOTAL		3-PTS		FT-FTA		REBOUNDS		PF	FO	A	TO	Blk	Stl	Pts	Avg			
					FG-FGA	Pct	3FG-FGA	Pct	Pct	Pct	Off	Def									Tot	Avg	
15	LEONARD, Kawhi	3	3	93	31.0	22-42	.524	3-6	.500	4-4	1.000	11	17	28	9.3	7	0	4	6	2	4	51	17.0
32	WHITE, Billy	3	3	91	30.3	15-33	.455	0-3	.000	14-15	.933	13	11	24	8.0	6	0	5	6	2	6	44	14.7
04	THOMAS, Malcolm	3	3	101	33.7	13-25	.520	0-0	.000	9-17	.529	8	17	25	8.3	7	0	16	5	3	3	35	11.7
22	TAPLEY, Chase	3	3	81	27.0	9-23	.391	3-7	.429	2-2	1.000	2	7	9	3.0	4	0	7	6	0	6	23	7.7
23	GAY, D.J.	3	3	109	36.3	7-23	.304	4-12	.333	0-0	.000	0	5	5	1.7	3	0	4	6	0	3	18	6.0
21	FRANKLIN, Jamaal	3	0	27	9.0	5-10	.500	4-8	.500	2-3	.667	0	2	2	0.7	4	0	1	3	1	2	16	5.3
11	RAHON, James	3	0	51	17.0	4-12	.333	2-6	.333	0-0	.000	1	3	4	1.3	3	0	4	1	0	2	10	3.3
10	SHELTON, Tim	3	0	15	5.0	3-4	.750	1-1	1.000	0-2	.000	0	3	3	1.0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	2.3
05	CARLWELL, Brian	3	0	32	10.7	1-6	.167	0-0	.000	4-6	.667	2	3	5	1.7	2	0	1	3	0	0	6	2.0
TEAM												5	4	9	4.5	0				0			
SDSU TOTALS		3				79-178	.444	17-43	.395	35-49	.714	42	72	114	38.0	37	0	42	36	8	26	210	70.0
OPPONENTS		3				65-167	.389	14-52	.269	32-37	.865	33	65	98	32.7	39	-	29	41	13	14	176	58.7

SCORE BY PERIODS:	1st	2nd	OT	2OT	Total
SAN DIEGO STATE	117	93			- 210
OPPONENTS	80	96			- 176

# 2010-11 Team Game-By-Game

Opponent	Site/Date	FG-FGA	Pct	3P-3PA	Pct	FT-FTA	Pct	Off-Def	Tot	PF	AT	TO	BS	ST	1st-2nd	Pts
(25/rv) SDSU at Long Beach State	A 11/13	33-65 24-64	.508 .375	9-25 5-23	.360 .217	6-7 12-19	.857 .632	12-32 13-21	44 34	16 11	18 11	12 9	3 0	6 6	42-39 42-23	81 65
(25/rv) SDSU at (11/12) Gonzaga	A 11/16	33-65 25-52	.508 .481	5-13 5-18	.385 .278	8-15 21-27	.533 .778	18-21 9-20	39 29	24 17	12 10	16 4	1 2	9 7	42-37 37-39	79 76
(25/rv) SDSU vs. Green Bay	N 11/20	29-48 24-64	.604 .375	0-7 6-15	.000 .400	21-36 16-20	.583 .800	14-26 17-13	40 30	18 28	12 12	15 11	4 4	4 6	33-46 38-32	79 70
(25/rv) SDSU vs. IUPUI	N 11/21	25-50 15-36	.500 .417	7-17 5-13	.412 .385	4-4 11-15	1.000 .733	12-15 7-11	27 18	18 8	11 7	14 17	2 2	8 7	20-41 23-23	61 46
(18/22) SDSU at Miami (Ohio)	A 11/22	28-56 18-49	.500 .367	7-16 8-21	.438 .381	14-18 12-15	.778 .800	12-21 12-19	33 31	16 17	13 8	12 19	4 2	7 3	39-38 34-22	77 56
at (18/22) SDSU San Diego Christian	H 11/26	38-63 25-59	.603 .424	8-15 10-28	.533 .357	4-9 9-9	.444 1.000	12-25 8-14	37 22	10 8	19 17	12 12	4 1	6 5	44-44 34-35	88 69
at (17/19) SDSU (rv/rv) Saint Mary's	H 12/1	27-60 22-56	.450 .393	5-13 9-18	.385 .500	10-15 2-4	.667 .500	10-25 9-26	35 35	9 19	10 9	9 16	10 1	9 5	37-32 24-31	69 55
at (17/19) SDSU (-rv) Wichita State	H 12/4	30-59 26-56	.508 .464	4-14 9-18	.286 .500	19-30 8-12	.633 .667	10-26 6-21	36 27	17 25	15 13	8 13	5 6	10 6	37-46 36-33	83 69
(14/15) SDSU at California	A 12/8	28-59 18-48	.475 .375	10-22 0-9	.455 .000	11-19 21-28	.579 .750	8-20 14-24	28 38	21 18	16 13	8 18	7 0	6 4	28-49 26-31	77 57
at (14/15) SDSU San Diego	H 12/11	28-60 20-52	.467 .385	5-16 3-15	.313 .200	16-20 6-9	.800 .667	12-24 9-21	36 30	10 17	15 6	4 11	4 1	6 1	34-43 28-21	77 49
at (11/10) SDSU Cal Poly	H 12/13	16-46 14-48	.348 .292	0-18 8-22	.000 .364	19-24 9-13	.792 .692	14-25 10-16	39 26	17 24	12 7	14 14	10 1	6 10	16-35 15-30	51 45
at (11/10) SDSU UC Santa Barbara	H 12/18	32-57 25-64	.561 .391	12-24 5-17	.500 .294	14-17 9-10	.824 .900	11-21 18-16	32 34	15 17	19 16	9 13	4 0	1 2	57-33 29-35	90 64
(7/7) SDSU vs. San Francisco	N 12/21	24-47 21-50	.511 .420	5-17 6-16	.294 .375	9-13 8-14	.692 .571	8-22 13-19	30 32	13 19	10 11	15 14	6 0	6 10	31-31 31-25	62 56
(7/7) SDSU vs. IUPUI	N 12/22	23-49 21-44	.469 .477	3-20 4-12	.150 .333	7-9 8-11	.778 .727	7-16 8-20	23 28	12 10	11 8	12 16	2 1	7 2	27-29 29-25	56 54
at (7/7) SDSU Occidental	H 12/31	36-59 22-53	.610 .415	8-18 5-13	.444 .385	13-17 1-2	.765 .500	14-28 4-9	42 13	10 15	19 15	11 13	3 2	8 7	42-51 24-26	93 50
(6/6) SDSU at TCU	A 1/5	29-65 20-55	.446 .364	4-22 5-21	.182 .238	4-6 8-12	.667 .667	13-25 11-24	38 35	12 13	17 11	9 12	5 1	8 3	29-37 26-27	66 53
(6/6) SDSU at Utah	A 1/8	28-64 23-60	.438 .383	7-20 4-15	.350 .267	8-18 12-18	.444 .667	15-28 12-28	43 40	15 19	15 9	11 13	4 2	3 4	33-38 34-28	71 62
at (6/6) SDSU (rv/rv) UNLV	H 1/12	19-53 22-61	.358 .361	4-17 1-18	.235 .056	13-17 4-7	.765 .571	10-32 9-22	42 31	12 19	10 9	12 9	4 3	2 5	28-27 26-23	55 49
(6/6) SDSU at New Mexico	A 1/15	27-55 22-58	.491 .379	13-25 7-16	.520 .438	20-29 26-35	.690 .743	10-30 12-23	40 35	23 23	19 15	8 5	7 5	3 5	37-50 29-48	87 77
at (6/6) SDSU Air Force	H 1/19	25-54 22-43	.463 .512	11-26 6-11	.423 .545	7-16 5-6	.438 .833	16-18 4-16	34 20	10 17	14 16	10 13	4 0	8 3	34-34 30-25	68 55
(4/4) SDSU at (9/9) BYU	A 1/26	22-62 25-56	.355 .446	5-20 5-15	.250 .333	9-15 16-19	.600 .842	18-24 9-26	42 35	14 14	10 10	12 7	4 9	5 8	31-27 30-41	58 71
at (4/4) SDSU Wyoming	H 1/29	35-65 19-64	.538 .297	17-33 4-16	.515 .250	9-15 15-22	.600 .682	13-32 16-21	45 37	19 16	20 6	11 11	11 2	6 6	53-43 22-35	96 57
(7/6) SDSU at (rv/-) Colorado St.	A 2/2	22-55 19-52	.400 .365	4-16 2-8	.250 .250	8-10 14-22	.800 .636	5-29 7-30	34 37	18 16	11 14	13 12	3 2	7 6	31-25 29-25	56 54
at (6/6) SDSU TCU	H 2/5	20-51 21-53	.392 .396	2-9 5-16	.222 .313	18-24 6-9	.750 .667	14-25 8-19	39 27	9 20	11 11	7 7	2 4	3 1	28-32 24-29	60 53
at (6/6) SDSU Utah	H 2/8	32-71 22-62	.451 .355	5-11 3-12	.455 .250	16-26 6-12	.615 .500	17-33 11-25	50 36	15 21	17 9	4 15	6 5	9 2	48-37 21-32	85 53

## 2010-11 Team Game-By-Game

Opponent	Site/Date	FG-FGA	Pct	3P-3PA	Pct	FT-FTA	Pct	Off-Def	Tot	PF	AT	TO	BS	ST	1st-2nd	Pts
(6/6) SDSU at UNLV	A 2/12	20-47 22-58	.426 .379	3-7 1-15	.429 .067	20-22 12-19	.909 .632	10-26 14-18	36 32	19 17	7 8	14 9	2 2	4 4	34-29 27-30	63 57
at (6/6) SDSU New Mexico	H 2/16	21-52 22-53	.404 .415	5-8 5-12	.625 .417	21-31 13-17	.677 .765	14-19 14-23	33 37	16 22	10 13	9 17	9 8	5 5	31-37 24-38	68 62
(6/6) SDSU at Air Force	A 2/19	20-57 19-50	.351 .380	6-24 4-19	.250 .211	24-33 16-22	.727 .727	21-29 6-21	50 27	18 23	11 12	13 7	5 5	3 6	31-39 32-26	70 58
at (6/4) SDSU (7/7) Brigham Young	H 2/26	25-63 27-58	.397 .466	6-17 14-24	.353 .583	11-16 12-14	.688 .857	15-24 8-25	39 33	13 15	14 18	11 12	3 7	8 8	35-32 38-42	67 80
(9/9) SDSU at Wyoming	A 3/1	32-61 23-54	.525 .426	2-13 2-16	.154 .125	19-24 10-18	.792 .556	13-30 7-19	43 26	18 19	12 7	15 17	4 4	7 7	37-48 20-38	85 58
at (9/9) SDSU Colorado State	H 3/5	23-50 18-49	.460 .367	2-18 2-12	.111 .167	18-19 10-15	.947 .667	8-20 12-18	29 30	12 15	9 8	10 18	8 1	5 8	27-39 27-21	66 48
(7/6) SDSU vsUtah	N, MWC-QF 3/10	24-60 21-53	.400 .396	7-18 3-13	.389 .231	9-16 5-6	.563 .833	15-27 6-24	42 30	9 13	18 8	16 20	3 7	10 4	30-34 15-35	64 50
(7/6) SDSU at UNLV	A, MWC-SF 3/11	27-56 25-55	.482 .455	5-10 5-15	.500 .333	15-19 17-18	.789 .944	11-20 11-21	31 32	16 16	12 14	14 12	3 2	8 8	44-30 34-38	74 72
(7/6) SDSU vs. (8/8) Brigham Young	N, MWC-CH 3/12	28-62 19-59	.452 .322	5-15 6-24	.333 .250	11-14 10-13	.786 .769	16-25 16-20	41 36	12 10	12 7	6 9	2 4	8 2	43-29 31-23	72 54
SDSU vs. No. Colorado	N, NCAA-2R 3/17	27-66 19-56	.409 .339	9-22 8-22	.409 .364	5-8 4-8	.625 .500	15-30 9-24	45 33	8 7	11 8	4 9	5 0	5 2	30-38 24-26	68 50
SDSU vs. Temple	N, NCAA-3R 3/18	28-65 25-66	.431 .379	6-11 6-14	.545 .429	9-9 8-11	1.000 .727	13-29 13-22	42 35	14 15	13 13	13 11	6 1	6 3	36-18-7-10 31-23-7-3	71 64
SDSU vs. (9/8) Connecticut	N, NCAA-S16 3/24															

# 2010-11 Individual Game-By-Game (Points/Rebs./Asts.)

Opponent	Result	0 Alec Williams	3 LaBradford Franklin	4 Malcolm Thomas	5 Brian Carlwell	10 Tim Shelton	11 James Rahon	15 Kawhi Leonard	21 Jamaal Franklin	22 Chase Tapley	23 D.J. Gay	32 Billy White	42 Mehdi Cheriet
at Long Beach State	W, 81-65	DNT	0/0/0	10/9/6	0/1/0	0/2/1	14/4/0	21/12/3	CD	11/2/1	20/3/3	6/6/3	0/1/1
#at (11/12) Gonzaga	W, 79-76	DNT	0/0/0	0/1/1	8/2/2	2/1/0	12/4/2	18/12/3	CD	0/3/0	9/0/3	30/9/1	0/1/0
~vs. Green Bay	W, 79-70	CD	0/0/0	12/8/3	5/3/0	8/3/1	2/1/0	23/10/2	CD	14/0/3	7/6/1	6/3/2	2/1/0
~vs. IUPUI	W, 61-46	CD	3/1/1	4/3/0	0/2/0	CD	5/0/1	20/10/3	0/0/0	9/2/1	6/1/4	14/6/1	0/0/0
~at Miami (Ohio)	W, 77-56	CD	0/0/1	16/6/0	4/2/0	3/2/1	15/2/2	12/13/4	0/0/0	4/1/1	19/3/4	2/1/0	2/0/0
SAN DIEGO CHRISTIAN	W, 88-69	2/4/0	9/2/6	9/8/3	6/1/0	CD	8/3/3	14/6/0	4/1/0	14/3/1	5/1/5	10/3/1	7/3/0
(rv/rv) SAINT MARY'S	W, 69-55	CD	6/3/2	12/6/1	5/2/0	0/3/0	9/1/0	6/8/0	CD	14/5/0	8/3/3	9/2/4	CD
(-rv) WICHITA STATE	W, 83-69	CD	0/1/0	12/5/1	3/2/0	2/0/0	2/1/0	16/12/5	CD	4/3/1	14/4/6	24/4/2	6/2/0
at California	W, 77-57	0/0/0	2/0/0	8/6/4	0/2/0	2/4/1	15/0/0	20/3/1	0/0/0	6/7/3	14/3/3	10/2/4	0/0/0
SAN DIEGO	W, 77-49	0/0/0	4/1/3	20/6/0	8/3/0	0/0/0	5/2/1	13/13/4	2/3/1	2/1/2	16/0/4	5/4/0	2/0/0
CAL POLY	W, 51-45	CD	0/1/2	18/15/3	1/0/0	0/3/1	14/3/1	INJ	2/6/1	INJ	10/1/2	6/4/2	0/0/0
UC SANTA BARBARA	W, 90-64	0/0/0	0/1/2	18/10/4	11/3/0	2/5/1	9/1/1	13/7/2	2/0/0	12/1/5	12/1/3	11/3/1	0/0/0
\$vs. San Francisco	W, 62-56	3/1/0	0/0/0	10/4/1	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/3/0	23/14/2	CD	4/3/2	14/1/3	8/1/2	CD
\$vs. IUPUI	W, 56-54	0/0/0	CD	12/9/1	2/0/0	6/3/0	0/1/0	7/4/3	CD	5/2/5	18/0/1	6/4/1	CD
OCCIDENTAL	W, 93-50	9/4/0	4/1/3	14/9/3	7/6/1	CD	15/0/1	14/10/4	6/3/0	15/4/4	7/0/1	INJ	2/3/2
*at TCU	W, 66-53	CD	CD	18/10/2	8/6/0	0/0/0	6/1/0	14/11/2	0/2/1	12/1/4	4/3/6	4/2/2	0/2/0
*at Utah	W, 71-62	CD	CD	17/14/2	0/1/0	2/2/2	3/4/1	20/9/2	CD	5/2/2	18/4/3	6/0/3	CD
*(rv/rv) UNLV	W, 55-49	CD	CD	14/16/2	2/2/1	4/0/0	3/1/0	15/17/4	CD	2/0/1	5/1/2	10/3/0	CD
*at New Mexico	W, 87-77	CD	CD	6/7/3	2/1/0	4/3/2	6/0/1	19/15/4	CD	15/5/3	30/3/4	5/3/2	0/0/0
*AIR FORCE	W, 68-55	CD	CD	8/9/3	6/5/0	1/2/2	3/0/0	10/10/2	CD	8/1/3	20/2/3	12/5/1	CD
*at (9/9) Brigham Young	L, 58-71	CD	CD	10/6/1	0/0/0	3/3/0	7/2/0	22/15/2	CD	8/2/1	2/2/4	6/5/2	CD
*WYOMING	W, 96-57	3/4/0	6/2/2	2/6/3	8/10/1	3/1/0	14/2/3	2/6/4	4/2/1	24/0/2	12/2/2	10/6/1	8/3/1
*at (rv/-) Colorado State	W, 56-54	CD	CD	6/6/0	0/1/0	0/2/0	15/1/0	12/15/4	3/0/0	5/0/1	6/3/4	9/3/2	0/1/0
*TCU	W, 60-53	CD	CD	11/14/1	0/2/0	0/0/0	7/2/0	11/10/2	0/2/1	3/0/0	9/2/6	19/4/1	0/0/0
*UTAH	W, 85-53	2/1/0	0/2/0	8/10/5	10/3/0	INJ	8/2/0	12/14/3	13/10/2	INJ	15/1/6	15/3/1	2/1/0
*at UNLV	W, 63-57	CD	CD	9/7/2	4/5/0	INJ	12/3/1	14/10/0	0/1/0	INJ	20/3/3	4/3/1	0/0/0
*NEW MEXICO	W, 68-62	CD	CD	22/6/1	3/6/0	0/0/0	5/2/2	22/9/3	CD	5/2/1	11/2/3	0/2/0	CD
*at Air Force	W, 70-58	CD	CD	20/13/0	3/3/0	0/0/0	3/3/1	18/15/2	0/2/0	10/8/0	9/2/5	7/3/3	CD
*(7/7) BRIGHAM YOUNG	L, 67-80	CD	CD	9/11/1	4/2/0	0/2/0	10/1/3	17/13/4	CD	11/2/1	6/3/3	10/3/2	CD
*at Wyoming	W, 85-58	2/0/0	2/0/1	15/11/2	15/8/1	ILL	5/1/0	12/9/2	6/4/1	6/3/2	11/2/3	6/1/0	5/1/0
*COLORADO STATE	W, 66-48	CD	CD	8/3/2	4/4/0	2/1/0	0/0/0	17/12/2	4/1/0	9/2/2	7/0/1	13/5/2	2/1/0
`vs. Utah (QF)	W, 64-50	CD	CD	13/10/8	3/1/0	2/2/0	3/0/1	13/12/2	9/1/0	7/0/5	3/2/1	11/9/1	CD
`at UNLV (SF)	W, 74-72	CD	CD	13/8/5	0/2/1	2/0/0	5/2/1	18/8/1	7/0/0	2/6/1	15/2/1	12/3/2	CD
`vs. (8/8) Brigham Young (CH)	W, 72-54	CD	CD	9/7/3	3/2/0	3/1/0	2/2/2	20/8/1	0/1/1	14/3/1	0/1/2	21/12/2	CD
^vs. No. Colorado (2R)	W, 68-50	CD	CD	4/4/1	0/4/0	0/2/0	12/1/0	21/10/2	0/0/0	14/4/3	5/4/3	12/13/2	CD
^vs. Temple (3R)	W, 71-64	CD	CD	13/9/3	2/1/1	0/0/0	3/1/0	16/9/3	CD	12/1/0	9/6/5	16/13/1	CD

+vs. (9/8) Connecticut (S16)

CD - Did Not Play-Coach's Decision. DND - Did Not Dress. DNT - Did Not Travel. INJ - Did Not Play-Injured. # - O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic. ~ - O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic (Oxford, Ohio). \$ - Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic (Las Vegas, Nev.). \* Mountain West Conference game. ` - Mountain West Conference Championship (Thomas & Mack Center; Las Vegas, Nev.). ^ - NCAA Tournament (Tucson, Ariz.). + - NCAA Tournament (Anaheim, Calif.).

## 2010-11 Starting Lineups

F	F	C	G	G	W-L	Record As SDSU Starter	Season	Career*
Leonard	White	Thomas	Tapley	Gay	27-2	Brian Carlwell	1-0	3-1
Rahon	White	Thomas	L. Franklin	Gay	1-0	Mehdi Cheriet		2-0
Leonard	White	Thomas	Rahon	Gay	5-0	LaBradford Franklin	1-0	1-0
Leonard	Thomas	Carlwell	Tapley	Gay	1-0	D.J. Gay	34-2	93-26
						Kawhi Leonard	33-2	57-11
						James Rahon	6-0	6-0
						Tim Shelton		13-5
						Chase Tapley	28-2	40-7
						Malcolm Thomas	34-2	58-11
						Billy White	33-2	94-29

\* Aztec career



## 2010-11 Individual Superlatives

Category	San Diego State	Opponent
Points Scored	30 - D.J. Gay at New Mexico (1-15-11) 30 - Billy White at Gonzaga (11-16-10)	43 - Jimmer Fredette at Brigham Young (1-26-11)
Field Goals	14 - Billy White at Gonzaga (11-16-10)	14 - Jimmer Fredette at Brigham Young (1-26-11)
Field Goals Attempted	20 - Kawhi Leonard at Brigham Young (1-26-11) 20 - Kawhi Leonard at Gonzaga (11-16-10)	25 - Jimmer Fredette vs. Brigham Young (3-12-11)
Highest FG Percentage (min. 5 made)	100.0 (6-6) - Billy White vs. Colorado State (3-5-11)	71.4 (5-7) - Mitchell Patton vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)
Highest FG Percentage (min. 10 made)	83.3 (10-12) - Billy White vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)	58.8 (10-17) - Drew Gordon at New Mexico (1-15-11)
3-Point Field Goals Made	7 - D.J. Gay at New Mexico (1-15-11)	6 - Devon Beitzel vs. Northern Colorado (3-17-11)
3-Point Field Goals Attempted	11 - D.J. Gay vs. Air Force (1-19-11) 11 - D.J. Gay at New Mexico (1-15-11)	11 - Aaron Felix vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10) 11 - Greg Plater at Long Beach State (11-13-10)
3-Point Field Goal Percentage (min. 4 made)	80.0 (4-5) - Chase Tapley vs. Temple (3-19-11) 80.0 (4-5) - D.J. Gay vs. San Diego (12-11-10) 80.0 (4-5) - Kawhi Leonard vs. IUPUI (11-21-10) 80.0 (4-5) - D.J. Gay at Long Beach State (11-13-10)	80.0 (4-5) - David Kyles vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)
3-Point Field Goal Percentage (min. 5 made)	63.6 (7-11) - D.J. Gay at New Mexico (1-15-11)	62.5 (5-8) - Jimmer Fredette at Brigham Young (1-26-11)
Free Throws	10 - Malcolm Thomas vs. New Mexico (2-16-11)	10 - Jimmer Fredette at Brigham Young (1-26-11)
Free Throws Attempted	14 - D.J. Gay at New Mexico (1-15-11) 14 - Kawhi Leonard vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)	11 - Jimmer Fredette vs. Brigham Young (3-12-11) 11 - Jimmer Fredette at Brigham Young (1-26-11) 11 - Kendall Williams at New Mexico (1-15-11)
Free Throw Percentage (min. 7 made)	100.0 (8-8) - D.J. Gay vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)	100.0 (9-9) - Jorge Gutierrez at California (12-8-10)
Free Throw Percentage (min. 10 made)	83.3 (10-12) - Malcolm Thomas vs. New Mexico (2-16-11)	90.9 (10-11) - Jimmer Fredette at Brigham Young (1-26-11)
Offensive Rebounds	9 - Kawhi Leonard at Brigham Young (1-26-11)	10 - J.R. Cadot at TCU (1-5-11)
Defensive Rebounds	14 - Kawhi Leonard vs. UNLV (1-12-11)	9 - Drew Gordon at New Mexico (1-15-11)
Total Rebounds	17 - Kawhi Leonard vs. UNLV (1-12-11)	14 - Drew Gordon at New Mexico (1-15-11)
Assists	8 - Malcolm Thomas vs. Utah (3-10-11)	9 - Jimmer Fredette vs. Brigham Young (2-26-11)
Blocked Shots	6 - Malcolm Thomas vs. Wyoming (1-29-11) 6 - Malcolm Thomas vs. Saint Mary's (12-1-10)	4 - David Foster vs. Utah (3-10-11) 4 - Noah Hartsock vs. Brigham Young (2-26-11) 4 - David Foster vs. Utah (2-8-11)
Steals	5 - Billy White vs. Brigham Young (3-12-11) 5 - D.J. Gay vs. Utah (2-8-11)	4 - Rahmon Fletcher vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)
Minutes Played	50 - D.J. Gay vs. Temple (3-19-11)	50 - Lavoy Allen vs. Temple (3-19-11) 50 - Rahlir Jefferson vs. Temple (3-19-11)

## 2010-11 Team Superlatives

SDSU High	SDSU Low	Category	Opponent High	Opponent Low
96 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)	51 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)	Points Scored	80 vs. Brigham Young (2-26-11)	45 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)
38 vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10)	16 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)	Field Goals	27 vs. Brigham Young (2-26-11)	14 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)
71 vs. Utah (2-8-11)	46 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)	Field Goals Attempted	66 vs. Temple (3-19-11)	36 vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)
61.0 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)	34.8 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)	FG Percentage	51.2 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)	29.2 vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)
17 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)	0 vs. Cal Poly, vs. Green Bay	3-Point Field Goals Made	14 vs. Brigham Young (2-26-11)	0 at California (12-8-10)
33 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)	7 vs. Green Bay, at UNLV	3-Point Field Goals Attempted	28 vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10)	8 at Colorado State (2-2-11)
54.5 vs. Temple (3-19-11)	0.0 vs. Cal Poly, vs. Green Bay	3-Point Field Goal Percentage	58.3 vs. Brigham Young (2-26-11)	0.0 at California (12-8-10)
24 at Air Force (2-19-11)	4 vs. San Diego, vs. IUPUI, at TCU	Free Throws Made	26 at New Mexico (1-15-11)	1 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
36 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)	4 vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)	Free Throws Attempted	35 at New Mexico (1-15-11)	2 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
100.0 vs. IUPUI vs. Temple	43.8 vs. Air Force (1-19-11)	Free Throw Percentage	100.0 vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10)	50.0 - four times
21 at Air Force (2-19-11)	5 at Colorado State (2-2-11)	Offensive Rebounds	18 vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10)	4 vs. Occidental vs. Air Force
33 vs. Utah (2-8-11)	16 vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)	Defensive Rebounds	30 at Colorado State (2-2-11)	9 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
50 vs. Utah, at Air Force	23 vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)	Total Rebounds	40 at Utah (1-8-11)	13 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
24 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)	8 vs. Northern Colorado (3-17-11)	Fouls	28 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)	7 vs. Northern Colorado (3-17-11)
1 - eight times	0 - many times	Fouled Out	2 vs. Cal Poly, vs. Green Bay	0 - many times
20 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)	7 at UNLV (2-12-11)	Assists	18 vs. Brigham Young (2-26-11)	6 vs. San Diego, vs. Wyoming
16 at Gonzaga vs. Utah	4 vs. San Diego vs. Utah vs. No. Colo.	Turnovers	20 vs. Utah (3-10-11)	5 at New Mexico (1-15-11)
11 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)	1 at Gonzaga (11-16-10)	Blocked Shots	9 at Brigham Young (1-26-11)	0 - many times
10 vs. Wichita State vs. Utah	1 vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10)	Steals	10 vs. USE, Cal Poly	1 vs. San Diego, vs. TCU
57 vs. UC Santa Barbara, 1st (12-18-10)	16 vs. Cal Poly, 1st (12-13-10)	Points/Half	48 at New Mexico, 2nd (1-15-11)	15 vs. Cal Poly, 1st/Utah, 1st
87.5 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)	30.3 at Air Force, 1st (2-19-11)	FG Percentage/Half	57.9 at California, 2nd (12-8-10)	18.5 vs. Cal Poly, 2nd (12-13-10)
6 vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10)	2 - six times	Double-Figure Scorers	5 vs. Brigham Young (2-26-11)	1 - four times
+29 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)	-10 at California (12-8-10)	Rebound Margin		
+31 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)	-5 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)	Halftime Scoring Margin		

# 2010-11 Biggest Leads/Time in Lead/Specialty Stats

Date	Opponent	SDSU Result	SDSU Big Opp Big				Ties	SDSU in			Opp in	Tied	Paint		Off TOs		2nd Ch.		Bench	
			Lead	Lead	Lead	Lead		LC	Lead	Lead			Lead	SD	Opp	SD	Opp	SD	Opp	SD
Nov. 13	at Long Beach State	W	81-65	16	7	5	12	24:17	12:39	3:04		46	38	9	12	19	11	14	6	
Nov. 16	% at (11/11) Gonzaga	W	79-76	10	2	1	2	38:29	0:14	1:17		38	26	14	20	24	10	22	9	
Nov. 20	% vs. Green Bay	W	79-70	10	22	0	1	17:21	22:05	0:34		54	24	17	12	11	11	17	6	
Nov. 21	% vs. IUPUI	W	61-46	18	7	2	12	18:35	20:29	0:56		30	16	25	12	15	6	8	6	
Nov. 22	% at Miami	W	77-56	28	11	3	2	128:25	7:31	4:04		34	16	28	11	13	5	24	27	
Nov. 26	SAN DIEGO CHRISTIAN	W	88-69	24	0	0	0	139:45	0:00	0:15		60	20	13	11	17	9	36	13	
Dec. 1	SAINT MARY'S	W	69-55	20	2	1	1	138:30	0:23	1:07		30	24	15	10	16	6	20	17	
Dec. 4	^ WICHITA STATE	W	83-69	17	4	7	12	31:59	4:49	3:12		48	24	18	7	15	5	13	21	
Dec. 8	at California	W	77-57	21	5	3	13	33:46	4:12	2:02		26	26	22	8	7	8	19	6	
Dec. 11	SAN DIEGO	W	77-49	30	7	4	8	125:47	11:13	3:00		34	16	19	2	17	8	21	31	
Dec. 13	CAL POLY	W	51-45	12	4	1	4	129:27	7:52	2:41		28	10	14	13	6	8	3	7	
Dec. 18	UC SANTA BARBARA	W	90-64	29	0	1	0	139:35	0:00	0:25		34	36	25	7	19	11	27	22	
Dec. 21	\$ vs. San Francisco	W	62-56	9	2	13	12	21:27	8:15	10:18		26	28	20	21	12	7	3	12	
Dec. 22	\$ vs. IUPUI	W	56-54	13	4	10	7	21:07	11:43	7:10		32	26	18	17	9	11	8	17	
Dec. 31	OCCIDENTAL	W	93-50	47	0	0	0	139:44	0:00	0:16		46	12	15	5	17	3	36	10	
Jan. 5	* at TCU	W	66-53	19	6	2	8	124:38	13:58	1:24		44	24	23	13	10	9	14	13	
Jan. 8	* at Utah	W	71-62	12	6	6	12	29:04	7:23	3:33		22	30	14	11	11	15	5	13	
Jan. 12	* UNLV	W	55-49	12	4	6	7	132:19	4:31	3:10		26	30	8	9	13	6	9	14	
Jan. 15	* at New Mexico	W	87-77	18	7	1	2	129:36	8:39	1:45		28	16	4	5	12	10	12	13	
Jan. 19	* AIR FORCE	W	68-55	16	6	4	3	126:43	10:42	2:35		26	20	24	8	15	4	10	16	
Jan. 26	* at (9/9) Brigham Young	L	58-71	4	13	7	15	10:13	22:40	7:07		22	26	10	16	13	2	10	4	
Jan. 29	* WYOMING	W	96-57	41	0	0	0	139:56	0:00	0:04		26	22	16	5	13	11	46	5	
Feb. 2	* at Colorado State	W	56-54	8	6	4	4	30:45	5:39	3:36		26	28	5	12	2	5	18	7	
Feb. 5	* TCU	W	60-53	11	6	2	5	128:15	9:34	2:11		24	26	7	6	12	8	7	6	
Feb. 8	* UTAH	W	85-53	34	2	1	1	138:30	0:29	1:01		50	30	23	0	19	11	27	7	
Feb. 12	* at UNLV	W	63-57	12	2	5	3	35:53	1:13	2:54		14	28	4	13	17	10	4	19	
Feb. 16	* NEW MEXICO	W	68-62	14	4	2	3	133:01	6:13	0:46		30	30	14	11	18	14	8	17	
Feb. 19	* at Air Force	W	70-58	15	7	5	11	18:47	15:52	5:21		18	18	10	14	19	2	13	18	
Feb. 26	* (7/7) BRIGHAM YOUNG	L	67-80	2	13	1	1	1:44	1:56	36:20		32	22	10	12	7	9	14	5	
Mar. 1	* at Wyoming	W	85-58	27	6	1	4	129:58	9:20	0:42		52	32	21	13	17	8	35	8	
Mar. 5	* COLORADO STATE	W	66-48	18	4	6	2	26:11	7:42	6:07		32	26	25	7	12	12	12	21	
Mar. 10	` vs. Utah (MWC-QF)	W	64-50	23	2	5	3	132:16	1:24	6:20		28	30	21	21	2	8	17	4	
Mar. 11	` at UNLV (MWC-SF)	W	74-72	12	2	6	6	34:48	1:08	4:04		32	30	16	25	8	13	14	4	
Mar. 12	` vs. (8/8) Brigham Young (MWC-CH)	W	72-54	23	1	1	2	138:16	0:29	1:15		40	16	15	4	21	9	8	2	
Mar. 17	^ vs. No. Colorado (NCAA-2R)	W	68-50	18	1	4	2	138:02	0:16	1:42		28	18	7	2	14	5	12	4	
Mar. 18	^ vs. Temple (NCAA-3R)	W-2ot	71-64	11	3	7	7	34:23	3:54	11:43		38	24	14	12	8	12	5	14	
Mar. 24	+ vs. (9/8) Connecticut (NCAA-S16)																			

~ - O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic (neutral games played in Oxford, Ohio). ^ - Mountain West-Missouri Valley Challenge. \$ - Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic (South Point Arena). \* - MWC Game. ` - MWC Championship (Thomas & Mack Center; Las Vegas, Nev.). ^ - NCAA Tournament (Tucson, Ariz.). + - NCAA Tournament (Anaheim, Calif.). ! - Next to time indicates SDSU did not trail in the second half.

# 2010-11 Offensive Leaders

Player	GP-GS	10+Pts.	20+Pts.	30+Pts.	10+Rebs.	15+Rebs.	10+Ast.	Double-Double	Led SDSU In (includes ties)				Personal W-L-T	
									Pts.	Rebs.	Ast.	Efficiency Hockey +/-		
Brian Carlwell	36-1	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	4	24-11-1
Mehdi Cheriet	21-0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11-10-0
Jamaal Franklin	21-0	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	13-7-1
LaBradford Franklin	17-1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	10-5-2
D.J. Gay	36-36	18	4	1	-	-	-	-	6	-	20	2	6	32-4-0
Kawhi Leonard	35-35	32	10	-	23	5	-	23	16	24	10	17	5	32-2-1
James Rahon	36-6	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	7	24-11-1
Tim Shelton	30-0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	19-9-2
Chase Tapley	33-30	14	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	7	3	7	28-4-1
Malcolm Thomas	36-36	21	3	-	12	2	-	9	8	8	9	10	6	31-5-0
Billy White	35-35	18	3	1	3	-	-	3	6	3	4	4	5	27-6-2
Alec Williams	10-0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8-2-0

# Career Offensive Leaders

Player	GP	GS	10+Pts.	20+Pts.	30+Pts.	10+Rebs.	15+Rebs.	10+Ast.	DD	Led SDSU In (includes ties)			Personal W-L-T
										Pts.	Rebs.	Ast.	
Brian Carlwell	99	4	7	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	44-23-2
Mehdi Cheriet	56	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31-24-1
Jamaal Franklin	21	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	14-6-1
LaBradford Franklin	17	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10-5-2
D.J. Gay	139	119	55	9	1	-	-	-	-	17	1	53	100-36-3
Kawhi Leonard	69	68	56	13	-	42	9	-	40	27	43	14	57-11-1
James Rahon	68	23	29	4	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	24-11-1
Tim Shelton	77	18	11	-	-	3	-	-	1	3	10	3	53-20-4
Chase Tapley	66	47	27	1	-	-	-	-	-	6	2	12	48-17-1
Malcolm Thomas	102	97	60	10	-	31	5	-	19	16	21	19	55-14-1
Billy White	133	123	62	8	1	6	-	-	5	21	21	4	94-34-5
Alec Williams	22	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13-7-2

# Current/Longest Streaks

Player	Current		Career Lg GP	Current		Career Lg GS	Current Streaks			Career Long Streaks		
	GP Strk	Last GP/DNP		GS Strk	Last GS/DNS		10+Pts.	20+Pts.	10+Rebs.	10+Pts.	20+Pts.	10+Rebs.
Brian Carlwell	70	DNP-3/31/09	70	-	GS-12/31/10	3	-	-	-	1	-	1
Mehdi Cheriet	-	GP-3/5/11	29	-	GS-2/7/09	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Jamaal Franklin	-	GP-3/17/11	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
LaBradford Franklin	-	GP-3/1/11	13	-	GS-12/13/10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
D.J. Gay	139	DNP-3/19/07	139	70	DNS-3/31/09	70	-	-	-	7	2	-
Kawhi Leonard	25	DNP-12/13/10	44	25	DNS-12/13/10	38	14	-	-	13	2	8
James Rahon	36	DNP-3/18/10	36	-	GS-2/19/11	12	-	-	-	7	3	-
Tim Shelton	10	DNP-2/12/11	20	-	GS-1/13/10	6	-	-	-	4	-	1
Chase Tapley	10	DNP-2/12/11	29	8	DNS-2/19/11	15	3	-	-	3	-	-
Malcolm Thomas	70	DNP-3/31/09	70	67	DNS-11/19/09	67	1	-	-	12	2	4
Billy White	21	DNP-12/31/10	58	21	DNS-12/31/10	31	6	-	3	8	2	3
Alec Williams	-	GP-3/1/11	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

# Longest Runs

	DATE	RUN	TIME	NOTE
at Miami (Ohio)	Nov. 22	25-0	10:27	Aztecs break a 39-39 tie with 25 straight points; Gay 9 pts., Rahon 6 pts., Leonard 6 pts.
Wyoming	Jan. 29	16-0	7:15	The 16-0 run began in the final 4:37 of the first half; SDSU made six threes during the spurt
at Miami (Ohio)	Nov. 22	16-0	4:06	Rahon 7 pts., five Aztecs score as SDSU goes from 11 down to up five
vs. IUPUI	Nov. 21	15-0	3:45	Rahon 5 pts., White 4 pts., Leonard 3 pts., Tapley 3 pts.
Wyoming	Jan. 29	*14-0	3:30	SDSU opens game on 14-0 run; White 6 pts., Tapley 5 pts.; Two dunks
UC Santa Barbara	Dec. 18	14-0	4:22	Thomas scores seven points as SDSU makes late first-half run to go up by 26
Wichita State	Dec. 4	14-0	2:11	Billy White scores nine points in SDSU's run that pushes that puts SDSU up 60-47
Saint Mary's	Dec. 1	14-0	3:42	After trailing 2-0, SDSU scores next 14 points; White 7 pts.
vs. Northern Colorado	Mar. 17	13-0	6:08	Rahon has 8 pts. during the run; Rahon and Gay make back-to-back 3FGs
at TCU	Jan. 5	13-0	2:54	Aztecs take lead from five to 18 with second-half spurt; SDSU has three dunks during run
Occidental	Dec. 31	13-0	2:21	Rahon starts run with consecutive three-point FGs; Aztecs make all six FGA during run
vs. IUPUI	Dec. 22	13-0	3:05	Aztecs break open a second-half tie with a 13-0 run; Five players score, White 4 pts.
at New Mexico	Jan. 15	12-0	2:59	SDSU goes from down seven to up five points mid-way through the first half; Tapley 6 pts.
at California	Dec. 8	12-0	2:21	Aztecs take a nine-point advantage to 21 in the second half at California; Leonard 5 pts.
at Wyoming	Mar. 1	11-0	3:39	SDSU opens game up with late first half run that carries over to 2nd half; Leonard 7 pts.
at Wyoming	Mar. 1	11-0	4:38	Aztecs go from down 15-14 to up 25-15; Carlwell's four points lead the way
Wyoming	Jan. 29	11-0	4:21	Five different SDSU players score during 11-0 first-half run
Air Force	Jan. 19	11-0	2:42	SDSU scores final nine points of the first half and first basket of second half; Gay 5 pts.
Occidental	Dec. 31	11-0	3:04	SDSU uses 11-0 run to open up 35 point lead; Leonard 4 pts., Thomas 4 pts., Rahon 3 pts.
Cal Poly	Dec. 13	11-0	4:45	Billy White caps run by scoring final four points; SDSU builds 29-17 second-half lead
at Long Beach State	Nov. 13	11-0	2:53	Rahon makes three consecutive three-point field goals
vs. Northern Colorado	Mar. 17	10-0	2:23	Billy White scores first five points of a 10-0 run
Colorado State	Mar. 5	10-0	3:02	After CSU takes a two-point lead by scoring first basket of second half, SDSU responds
at Utah	Jan. 8	10-0	2:52	Gay scores the final eight points of this second half run that takes the lead to 11 points
San Diego	Dec. 11	10-0	2:53	Aztecs get two three-point field goals from D.J. Gay to build a 48-30 advantage
vs. IUPUI	Nov. 21	10-0	2:41	Leonard 6 pts. and White 4 pts.
Saint Mary's	Dec. 1	10-0	3:50	LaBradford Franklin scores four points in SDSU's second half run
vs. Green Bay	Nov. 20	10-0	2:49	Tapley scores four points on this run that was on either side of halftime
vs. Temple	Mar. 19	9-0	4:49	Thomas 4 pts., Tapley 3 pts., White 2 pts. in this first half run in the NCAA Tournament
vs. Brigham Young	Mar. 12	9-0	3:57	SDSU gets second half run to push advantage to 18 points
at UNLV	Mar. 11	9-0	2:37	Whites has 4 pts. during 9-0 run in MWC semifinals
Colorado State	Mar. 5	9-0	3:25	Whites scores five points during this late second half run
at Colorado State	Feb. 2	9-0	3:24	White, Rahon, Thomas and Leonard all score during this second half run to put SDSU up
at New Mexico	Jan. 15	9-0	0:43	Gay hits two straight threes to end the first half and knocks down another one to open 2nd
at TCU	Jan. 5	9-0	3:24	SDSU scores final four points of first half and first five of second half to open 8-point lead
San Diego	Dec. 11	9-0	2:20	Thomas scores seven points as SDSU takes a first-half lead against San Diego
Wichita State	Dec. 4	9-0	1:58	Four players help SDSU go on late first-half run
Saint Mary's	Dec. 1	9-0	2:47	Aztecs push lead from four to 13; Tapley scores seven straight during the run
at Miami (Ohio)	Nov. 22	9-0	2:43	Part of a 25-2 run, SDSU gets six points from Thomas during the 9-0 run
vs. Green Bay	Nov. 20	9-0	1:15	Aztecs trailed 30-10 in the first half, before scoring nine straight points; Thomas 5 pts.

\* - Streak opened the game.

	DATE	RUN	TIME	NOTE
at Miami (Ohio)	Nov. 22	32-4 (+28)	12:08	Aztecs used a 25-0 run inside the 32-4 spurt to break a 39-39 tie; Gay 14 pts.
at Wyoming	Mar. 1	31-7 (+24)	13:32	SDSU takes control, going from down five to up 19 pts.; Thomas 7 pts., Leonard 6 pts.
at TCU	Jan. 5	30-6 (+24)	9:15	SDSU goes from down six to up 18 following the run; Thomas 10 pts., Leonard 8 pts.
at Miami (Ohio)	Nov. 22	25-2 (+23)	8:14	Aztecs go from down 11 to up 12; Rahon 9 pts., Thomas 6 pts. during spurt
vs. IUPUI	Nov. 21	25-4 (+21)	10:10	Aztecs trailed by three points, but led by 18 points after the 25-4 run; Leonard 9 pts.
vs. Utah	Feb. 8	21-3 (+18)	4:07	Aztecs trailed, 7-6, before going on run and wound up leading 28-9; Carlwell 6 pts.
Wichita State	Dec. 4	21-3 (+18)	3:22	Aztecs trailed 47-46 before 21-3 run put SDSU up 17; White 11 pts. during run
UC Santa Barbara	Dec. 18	22-5 (+17)	7:22	Aztecs use late first half spurt and early second half spurt to push 12 point lead to 29
Cal Poly	Dec. 13	20-4 (+16)	13:11	Aztecs go from down four to up 12; Run covers both sides of halftime
Air Force	Jan. 19	23-8 (+15)	10:06	SDSU goes from down five to up 10; Gay 8 pts., Leonard 4 pts.
San Diego	Dec. 11	16-2 (+14)	5:12	Aztecs take an eight-point lead to 22; Gay 6 pts., Leonard 5 pts.
San Diego	Dec. 11	16-3 (+13)	5:18	Aztecs rally from seven down to take a six point lead at intermission; Thomas 11 pts.
at New Mexico	Jan. 15	14-1 (+13)	3:36	SDSU scores 12 unanswered before settling for 14-1 run to take six-point first-half lead
vs. Green Bay	Nov. 20	18-5 (+13)	6:19	Aztecs trailed 28-7, but used an 18-5 run to close within eight pts.; Thomas: 9 pts.
at Air Force	Feb. 19	16-4 (+12)	4:12	Aztecs push lead from 3 to 15 with 2nd half run; Leonard 6 pts., Thomas 5 pts.
at Utah	Jan. 8	17-5 (+12)	4:00	Leonard scores eight points and Gay scores six points during this early 2nd half run
at Long Beach State	Nov. 13	15-3 (+12)	4:13	Aztecs close game on 15-3 run; Gay 7 pts., Leonard 4 pts., White 4 pts.

# San Diego State Season/Career Highs

## #0 • ALEC WILLIAMS

	Season	Career
Points	9 vs. Occidental, 12-31-10	11 vs. Pomona-Pitzer, 12-31-09
Rebounds	4 - three times	7 vs. UC San Diego, 11-14-09
Assists		1 - three times
Steals		-
Blocked Shots	1 vs. Occidental, 12-31-10	1 - two times
Minutes	14 vs. Occidental, 12-31-10	21 vs. UC San Diego, 11-14-09

## #3 • LABRADFORD FRANKLIN

	Season/Career
Points	9 vs. San Diego Christian, 11-26-10
Rebounds	3 vs. Saint Mary's, 12-1-10
Assists	6 vs. San Diego Christian, 11-26-10
Steals	2 vs. Cal Poly, 12-13-10
Blocked Shots	
Minutes	23 vs. Cal Poly, 12-13-10

## #4 • MALCOLM THOMAS

	Season	Career
Points	22 vs. New Mexico, 2-16-11	28 vs. Utah, 2-20-10
Rebounds	16 vs. UNLV, 1-12-11	16 - two times
Assists	8 vs. Utah, 3-10-11	8 vs. Utah, 3-10-11
Steals	2 - four times	4 vs. UNLV, 2-13-10
Blocked Shots	6 - two times	6 - four times
Minutes	45 vs. Temple, 3-19-11	45 vs. Temple, 3-19-11

## #5 • BRIAN CARLWELL

	Season	Career
Points	15 at Wyoming, 3-1-11	15 at Wyoming, 3-1-11
Rebounds	10 vs. Wyoming, 1-29-11	10 vs. Wyoming, 1-29-11
Assists	2 at Gonzaga, 11-16-10	4 at Brigham Young, 2-24-10
Steals	1 - six times	2 vs. UC San Diego, 11-14-09
Blocked Shots	3 vs. Wyoming, 1-29-11	3 - three times
Minutes	23 vs. Occidental, 12-31-10	27 vs. UC San Diego, 11-14-09

## #10 • TIM SHELTON

	Season	Career
Points	8 vs. Green Bay, 11-20-10	17 - two times
Rebounds	5 vs. UC Santa Barbara, 12-18-10	12 vs. UNLV, 3-7-09
Assists	2 - three times	4 - three times
Steals	2 at Miami (Ohio), 11-22-10	3 vs. Seattle, 11-28-08
Blocked Shots	1 vs. IUPUI, 12-22-10	3 at Air Force, 1-3-09
Minutes	20 - two times	35 at Air Force, 1-3-09

## #11 • JAMES RAHON

	Season	Career
Points	15 - four times	25 - two times
Rebounds	4 - two times	5 vs. Portland, 2-28-09
Assists	3 - three times	5 - two times
Steals	3 at Miami (Ohio), 11-22-10	3 at Miami (Ohio), 11-22-10
Blocked Shots	1 at TCU, 1-5-11	1 at TCU, 1-5-11
Minutes	37 vs. Cal Poly, 12-13-10	43 vs. Portland, 2-28-09

## #15 • KAWHI LEONARD

	Season	Career
Points	23 - two times	26 vs. Wyoming, 2-10-10
Rebounds	17 vs. UNLV, 1-12-11	21 at UNLV, 3-13-10
Assists	5 vs. Wichita State, 12-4-10	5 - four times
Steals	4 vs. Wichita State, 12-4-10	4 - two times
Blocked Shots	2 - four times	3 vs. Tennessee, 3-18-10
Minutes	46 vs. Temple, 3-19-11	46 vs. Temple, 3-19-11

## #21 • JAMAAL FRANKLIN

	Season/Career
Points	13 vs. Utah, 2-8-11
Rebounds	10 vs. Utah, 2-8-11
Assists	2 vs. Utah, 2-8-11
Steals	2 vs. Utah, 3-10-11
Blocked Shots	2 vs. Cal Poly, 12-13-10
Minutes	20 vs. Cal Poly, 12-13-10

## #22 • CHASE TAPLEY

	Season	Career
Points	24 vs. Wyoming, 1-29-11	24 vs. Wyoming, 1-29-11
Rebounds	8 at Air Force, 2-19-11	8 at Air Force, 2-19-11
Assists	5 - three times	9 vs. Pomona-Pitzer, 12-31-09
Steals	4 vs. IUPUI, 11-21-10	4 - two times
Blocked Shots	1 - five times	2 - two times
Minutes	39 vs. Temple, 3-19-11	39 vs. Temple, 3-19-11

## #23 • D.J. GAY

	Season	Career
Points	30 at New Mexico, 1-15-11	30 at New Mexico, 1-15-11
Rebounds	6 - two times	6 - four times
Assists	6 - four times	7 - two times
Steals	5 vs. Utah, 2-8-11	5 - two times
Blocked Shots	1 - two times	1 - eight times
Minutes	50 vs. Temple, 3-19-11	50 vs. Temple, 3-19-11

## #32 • BILLY WHITE

	Season	Career
Points	30 at Gonzaga, 11-16-10	30 at Gonzaga, 11-16-10
Rebounds	13 - two times	13 - two times
Assists	4 - two times	4 - six times
Steals	5 - vs. Brigham Young, 3-12-11	5 - two times
Blocked Shots	3 - three times	4 - three times
Minutes	43 vs. Temple, 3-19-11	43 - two times

## #42 • MEHDI CHERIET

	Season	Career
Points	8 vs. Wyoming, 1-29-11	14 - two times
Rebounds	3 - three times	6 - two times
Assists	2 vs. Occidental, 12-31-10	2 - four times
Steals	1 - three times	2 vs. TCU, 1-28-09
Blocked Shots	2 at California, 12-8-10	2 at California, 12-8-10
Minutes	24 vs. Occidental, 12-31-10	30 at UNLV, 2-3-09

# 2010-11 Miscellaneous Statistics

## San Diego State's Record When...

Category	2010-11 Season	Fisher Era	SDSU Streak
Home	14-1	140-48	Won 1
Away	12-1	64-89	Won 5
Neutral	8-0	28-14	Won 8
Scoring First	22-2		Won 6
Opponent Scores First	12-0		Won 12
Leading at Half	26-1	176-39	Won 12
Trailing at Half	5-1	43-110	Lost 1
Tied at Half	3-0	13-2	Won 4
Leading with 5:00 Left	34-0		Won 46
Trailing with 5:00 Left	0-2		Lost 7
Tied with 5:00 Left			Won 1
In Overtime	1-0	11-13	Won 1
SDSU Outrebounds Opp.	25-2	166-61	Won 5
SDSU is Outrebounded	8-0	60-85	Won 9
Opp. Commits More TOs	19-1	140-48	Won 5
SDSU Commits More TOs	11-1	79-93	Won 5
SDSU More FT Attempts	20-1	165-51	Won 5
Opp. More FT Attempts	11-1	58-97	Won 3
SDSU Shoots Better than Opp.	29-0	186-33	Won 38
Opp. Shoots Better than SDSU	5-2	41-116	Lost 1
SDSU Shoots 50% or Better	12-0	88-14	Won 17
SDSU Shoots 40-50%	16-0	112-68	Won 17
SDSU Shoots 40% or Less	6-2	31-69	Won 1
Opp. Shoots 50% or Better	1-0	20-51	Won 1
Opp. Shoots 40-50%	10-2	100-87	Won 2
Opp. Shoots 40% or Less	23-0	112-13	Won 23
SDSU Bench Outscores Opp.	19-2	117-62	Won 5
Opp. Bench Outscores SDSU	15-0	111-82	Won 15
SDSU Scores Less Than 60	4-1	18-51	Won 1
SDSU Scores Between 60-69	11-1	65-62	Won 3
SDSU Scores Between 70-79	10-0	82-21	Won 23
SDSU Scores Between 80-89	6-0	54-15	Won 7
SDSU Scores Between 90-99	3-0	12-2	Won 5
SDSU Scores 100+		1-0	Won 24
Opp. Scores Less Than 60	23-0	106-10	Won 33
Opp. Scores Between 60-69	7-0	75-36	Won 7
Opp. Scores Between 70-79	4-1	47-53	Won 1
Opp. Scores Between 80-89	0-1	4-35	Lost 6
Opp. Scores Between 90-99		0-14	Lost 24
Opp. Scores 100+		0-3	Lost 9
Wearing Black	7-1		Won 2
Wearing Red	6-0		Won 6
Wearing White	21-1		Won 6
On Monday	2-0		Won 3
On Tuesday	4-0		Won 10
On Wednesday	8-1		Won 2
On Thursday	2-0		Won 2
On Friday	3-0		Won 7
On Saturday	14-1		Won 3
On Sunday	1-0		Won 1
In November	6-0		Won 7
In December	9-0		Won 12
In January	6-1		Won 1
In February	6-1		Lost 1
In March	7-0		Won 7

## LEADS AND DEFICITS

SDSU Biggest Halftime Lead	31 vs. Wyoming (1-29-11)
SDSU Biggest Halftime Lead Lost	10 at UNLV (3-11-11)
SDSU Biggest Halftime Lead Lost in a Loss	1 at Brigham Young (1-26-11)
SDSU Biggest Halftime Deficit	5 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)
SDSU Biggest Halftime Deficit Overcome	5 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)
SDSU Biggest Halftime Deficit Overcome for Victory	5 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)
SDSU Biggest Lead	47 vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
SDSU Biggest Lead Lost	11 vs. Temple (3-19-11)
SDSU Biggest Lead Lost in a Loss	4 at Brigham Young (1-26-11)
SDSU Biggest Deficit	22 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)
SDSU Biggest Deficit Overcome	22 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)
SDSU Biggest Deficit Overcome for Victory	22 vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)

## DUNKS

	SEASON
Malcolm Thomas	.36
Billy White	.24
Kawhi Leonard	.20
Brian Carlwell	.16
Jamaal Franklin	.06
Chase Tapley	.02
Alec Williams	.01
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>.105</b>

## TOP SCORING PERFORMANCES

30, D.J. Gay at New Mexico* (1-15-11)
30, Billy White at Gonzaga (11-16-10)
24, Chase Tapley vs. Wyoming* (1-29-11)
24, Billy White vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)
23, Kawhi Leonard vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)
23, Kawhi Leonard vs. Green Bay (11-20-10)
22, Kawhi Leonard vs. New Mexico* (2-16-11)
22, Malcolm Thomas vs. New Mexico* (2-16-11)
22, Kawhi Leonard at Brigham Young* (1-26-11)
21, Kawhi Leonard vs. No. Colorado (3-17-11)
21, Billy White vs. Brigham Young (3-12-11)
21, Kawhi Leonard at Long Beach State (11-13-10)

## TOP REBOUNDING PERFORMANCES

17, Kawhi Leonard vs. UNLV* (1-12-11)
16, Malcolm Thomas vs. UNLV* (1-12-11)
15, Kawhi Leonard at Air Force* (2-19-11)
15, Kawhi Leonard at Colorado State* (2-2-11)
15, Kawhi Leonard at Brigham Young* (1-26-11)
15, Kawhi Leonard at New Mexico* (1-15-11)
15, Malcolm Thomas vs. Cal Poly (12-13-10)
14, Kawhi Leonard vs. Utah* (2-8-11)
14, Malcolm Thomas vs. TCU* (2-5-11)
14, Malcolm Thomas at Utah* (1-8-11)
14, Kawhi Leonard vs. San Francisco (12-21-10)
13, Billy White vs. Temple (3-19-11)
13, Billy White vs. No. Colorado (3-17-11)
13, Kawhi Leonard at Brigham Young* (2-26-11)
13, Malcolm Thomas at Air Force* (2-19-11)
13, Kawhi Leonard vs. San Diego (12-11-10)
13, Kawhi Leonard at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)
12, Billy White vs. Brigham Young (3-12-11)
12, Kawhi Leonard vs. Utah` (3-10-11)
12, Kawhi Leonard vs. Colorado State* (3-5-11)
12, Kawhi Leonard vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)
12, Kawhi Leonard at Gonzaga (11-16-10)

12, Kawhi Leonard at Long Beach State (11-13-10)

## TOP ASSIST PERFORMANCES

8, Malcolm Thomas vs. Utah` (3-10-11)
6, D.J. Gay vs. Utah* (2-8-11)
6, D.J. Gay vs. TCU* (2-5-11)
6, D. J. Gay at TCU* (1-5-11)
6, D.J. Gay vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)
6, LaBradford Franklin vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10)
6, Malcolm Thomas at Long Beach State (11-13-10)
5, D.J. Gay vs. Temple (3-19-11)
5, Malcolm Thomas at UNLV (3-11-11)
5, D.J. Gay at Air Force* (2-19-11)
5, Kawhi Leonard vs. Utah* (2-8-11)
5, Chase Tapley vs. IUPUI (12-22-10)
5, Chase Tapley vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10)
5, Kawhi Leonard vs. Wichita State (12-4-10)
5, D.J. Gay vs. San Diego Christian (11-26-10)

## TOP 3-POINT FG PERFORMANCES

7, D. J. Gay at New Mexico* (1-15-11)
6, D.J. Gay vs. Air Force* (1-19-11)
5, James Rahon vs. Occidental (12-31-10)
4, Chase Tapley vs. Temple (3-19-11)
4, D.J. Gay vs. Wyoming* (1-29-11)
4, James Rahon vs. Wyoming* (1-29-11)
4, D.J. Gay at Utah* (1-8-11)
4, D.J. Gay vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10)
4, Chase Tapley vs. UC Santa Barbara (12-18-10)
4, D.J. Gay vs. San Diego (12-11-10)
4, D.J. Gay at California (12-8-10)
4, D.J. Gay at Miami (Ohio) (11-22-10)
4, Kawhi Leonard vs. IUPUI (11-21-10)
4, D.J. Gay at Long Beach State (11-13-10)
4, James Rahon at Long Beach State (11-13-10)

## GAMES MISSED DUE TO INJURY OR ILLNESS

	SEASON
Tim Shelton	3
Chase Tapley	3
Kawhi Leonard	1
Billy White	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>

# 2010-11 Aztec Men's Basketball Media Clips

As of 3/21/11



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## 1 Fisher's big recruiting push for games, not players

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
July 29, 2010

San Diego State men's basketball coach Steve Fisher drove to Anaheim on Wednesday to do some recruiting at a summer youth tournament, and whenever he bumped into fellow college coaches he greeted them the same way:

"Hi, how are you doing? Do you want to play us?"

We are practically in August and Fisher's 2010-11 basketball schedule is still a construction zone, with hard hats and cranes and mounds of earth. He knows he'll have 16 Mountain West Conference games, leaving him with up to 15 nonconference dates. He's still looking for four Division I games, and that's after scrambling over the past few months to lock down opponents for the others — including several less-than-desirable dates and places.

Fisher is in his 12th season on Montezuma Mesa and 21st as an NCAA Division I head coach.

"This has been the hardest by far," he said of scheduling.

There are numerous culprits — late cancellations, conflicting dates, expiring contracts, shrinking budgets, television considerations — but more than anything it comes down to this: No one wants to play the Aztecs this year.

That's a backhanded compliment. The Aztecs are expected to be good, really good. With all five starters returning from a 25-win team that reached the NCAA Tournament and could have defeated Tennessee, not to mention a talented group of newcomers, Fisher's club is listed in many preseason Top-25 polls and already has surpassed last year's season-ticket sales.

"They all say: 'We're not going to play you, no way,'" Fisher said.

And he's willing to play anyone, anywhere. Already the Aztecs open with five games away from home — beginning Nov. 13 at Long Beach State — and have additional nonconference road dates against Cal, Gonzaga and Miami (Ohio). There are home games against Saint Mary's, which reached the NCAA Sweet 16; Wichita State, the favorite in the Missouri Valley Conference; and crosstown rival USD, which took the Aztecs into overtime last year.

Not a cupcake among them.

The problems began in early June, when Fisher got a call from an organizer of an NCAA-approved "exempt event" — meaning they can play up to four games and have it count as one — in Las Vegas. Despite verbal commitments going back to March, Fisher was informed the Aztecs were no longer in.

"Long story short," Fisher says, "now it's June 9 and I'm saying, 'What am I going to do to get into an exempt event?'"

Fisher worked the phones and finally found one — the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE (College Basketball Experience) Classic, a 12-team event played in mid-November that guaranteed him four games.

The catch: He'd have to play Nov. 16 at Gonzaga, which is 65-4 at the McCarthy Athletic Center since it opened in 2004.

The CBE Classic also has a funky format in that four marquee teams — Duke, Kansas State, Marquette and Gonzaga — are all guaranteed of advancing to the "championship round" in Kansas City on Nov. 22-23 no matter what happens in the games on their home courts. The Aztecs could blast the Zags by 30 at the McCarthy Center, and they're still not going to Kansas City.

Instead they'll head to something called the "subregional round" hosted by Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. And play three games in three days against the hosts and, most likely, Wisconsin-Green Bay and IUPUI (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis).

Switching exempt events to the CBE Classic also cost Fisher a game against Ari-

zona, which was tentatively scheduled in mid-November. Then Arizona, looking for a replacement game against someone from the Southwest, booked New Mexico State — which effectively nixed Fisher's verbal agreement to play the Aggies, coached by former Aztecs assistant Marvin Menzies.

"In essence, I lost two games," Fisher said. "That added to my woes."

Duke offered to host the Aztecs, but only on Dec. 8 or Jan. 5, and those dates conflicted with the Cal game and conference opener. Attempts to play Arizona State fell through, too. On and on it went, through June, into July, now heading into August.

"So if you're a small school that's going to play a so-called 'body-bag game' for the check, why not do it for \$95,000 instead of \$65,000? And if you're paying someone to come play you, why get someone like SDSU that might beat you?"

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Fisher's big recruiting push for games, not players")

The Aztecs' recent rise to basketball prominence probably works against them. It's one thing to lose to a traditional college basketball giant. But lose to, as Cal quarterback Dave Barr so infamously said about 15 years back, "San Diego Stinkin' State"?

"There are some coaches that are concerned if they lose to us, what will their uniformed alumni say who don't know the nuances of modern-day basketball?" Fisher said.

"There are some coaches who are fighting to save their jobs, who say, 'I can't afford to play someone I don't think I can beat.'"

There also is the money. Even schools from mid-major conferences, Fisher said, can offer close to \$100,000 guarantees for teams to play them at home, about \$30,000 more than he can.

So if you're a small school that's going to play a so-called "body-bag game" for the check, why not do it for \$95,000 instead of \$65,000? And if you're paying someone to come play you, why get someone like SDSU that might beat you?

So Fisher makes the rounds at the summer recruiting events, looking for a 6-foot-11, 260-pound center with a soft touch around the basket ... and games — against anyone, anywhere — for the rapidly approaching season. And not necessarily in that order.

## 2 San Diego State's Kawhi Leonard hoping offseason work pays off

By Mike DeCourcy | Sporting News  
September 29, 2010

San Diego State forward Kawhi Leonard was the only freshman to lead an NCAA Tournament team in both scoring and rebounding last season — and he did it all while he was "getting tired too fast" during games.

So Leonard spent much of the summer working to improve his conditioning — which can't be good news for teams playing the Aztecs this winter.

"I wanted to be in better shape than I was last year," Leonard said. "I ran a lot, did a lot of core work. Through games, I was getting tired too fast. I was kind of mad at myself because of that. I just felt like I could be way in better shape."

At 6-7, 225 pounds, Leonard averaged 12.7 points and 10.7 rebounds in 31 minutes per game for the Aztecs, who finished the year at 25-9 with a narrow-first round NCAA Tournament loss to Tennessee. He grabbed 21 rebounds in the Mountain West championship victory over UNLV. He twice reached the 25-point mark against Wyoming.

But not unlike a lot of players arriving in college for the first time, he could feel the difference in the physical demands of Division I basketball. And now he's sensing the improvements that resulted from his offseason work while attending summer school.

As San Diego State trains in advance of the official start of fall practice Oct. 15, Leonard no longer struggles.

"Last year, I came in and wasn't ready for the type of workouts we were doing. It was kind of burning me real quick," Leonard said. "I'm going through workouts real easy now. I feel better."

Leonard is highly regarded by draft analysts but is not eager to discuss his status

## 3-4

as a prospect. "I'm just focused on the upcoming season right now," he said. The Aztecs return all five starters from last season's team, including senior big man Malcolm Thomas and point guard D.J. Gay.

"We've got experience," Leonard said. "We played a year together, so chemistry is building."

Leonard wants to see San Diego State win another MWC championship and to advance in the NCAAs.

"That would be a great season," he said. "We just have to win games. That's what we need to do."

### 3 Kawhi Leonard was a steal for San Diego State

By Jeff Eisenberg | Rivals.com  
October 4, 2010

For a kid who received only late interest from most marquee West Coast programs and none at all from a handful of others, San Diego State's Kawhi Leonard is remarkably comfortable with how things turned out.

Not only is the sophomore happy to be playing for a San Diego State program favored to make its second straight NCAA tournament next season, he also insists doesn't use the recruiting snubs as motivation the way other players in his position do.

"I didn't get caught up in stuff like that," Leonard said. "I just chose a school I liked and moved forward. I just knew if you could play, somebody's always watching. It's not the school that brings out your name. It's about you."

Leonard proved that point during a brilliant freshman season by earning Mountain West freshman of the year honors, drawing the attention of NBA scouts and making bigger programs regret not recruiting him harder. The 6-foot-7 forward averaged a team-high 12.7 points, 9.9 boards and 1.4 steals per game, leading San Diego State to a Mountain West tournament championship and an NCAA tournament berth.

Although Leonard was the only freshman to lead an NCAA tournament team in scoring and rebounding last season, the Riverside, Calif. native believes the conditioning work he's done this summer will help him improve as a sophomore. The physical demands of Leonard's first season of college basketball took a toll on him, so he spent the summer lifting weights, doing core work and running sprints on the track.

"I want to last longer during the season and have more stamina during games," Leonard said. "I didn't really feel fatigued last season, but I felt like I wasn't at my potential most of the time. I felt like if I put in the work this summer, I can be that much better."

It's easy to criticize the UCLAs, USCs and Arizonas of the world for not spotting Leonard sooner, but there were some factors that prevented them from identifying him as a future star.

At a time when many big-time prospects are well known by their 15th birthdays, the late-blooming Leonard didn't begin playing organized basketball in either high school or the AAU circuit until his sophomore year. Furthermore, Leonard exhibited some qualities of a classic tweener, too small to play in the post in college yet not a consistent enough ball handler or perimeter shooter for the wing.

What San Diego State assistant coach Justin Hutson saw when he came to watch Leonard play during his junior season at Martin Luther King High was a basketball player who could help the Aztecs regardless of his position.

UCLA, USC, Arizona State and a handful of other programs eventually had also showed mild interest in Leonard, but nobody recruited him with the fervor and consistency of the Aztecs. Instead of waiting until the spring of his senior year to select a school in hopes of drumming up more interest from elite programs, Leonard committed to San Diego State in Oct. 2008 and signed the following month.

"When he decided to go to San Diego State, me and him had a conversation because I told him he might want to wait and see who else is interested," Leonard's mother, Kim Robertson, said. "He told me, 'Mom, no, I don't want to go to those other schools. They came too late.' He didn't care about the big schools. He just wanted somewhere that he could play."

Leonard validated the Aztecs' interest and rose up the recruiting rankings by earning California's Mr. Basketball award as a senior. His superb season was highlighted by an 11-point, 20-rebound, 6-block masterpiece in a section title game victory against the nation's top-ranked high school team, Santa Ana Mater Dei.

"That Mater Dei game was so much excitement," Robertson, said. "People really weren't recognizing him, but when he played that well against Mater Dei, it opened up a lot of eyes. I don't think they thought of players from the Inland Empire that way until that game, but he got on people's radar after that."

"For a kid who received only late interest from most marquee West Coast programs and none at all from a handful of others, San Diego State's Kawhi Leonard is remarkably comfortable with how things turned out."

- Jeff Eisenberg (Rivals.com - "Kawhi Leonard was a steal for San Diego State")

Expectations were high for Leonard at San Diego State since he arrived as coach Steve Fisher's most decorated recruit, yet if anything, he managed to exceed them as a freshman. He made up for his lack of outside shooting prowess with a quick first step to the rim, a knack for rebounding and lock-down defense buoyed by his ridiculous 7-foot wingspan.

DraftExpress.com projects Leonard as a late first-round pick next June, but as surreal as that is for a kid accustomed to playing in obscurity, that's not where his focus is at the moment. Leonard intends to lead San Diego State to a Mountain West title and a deep NCAA tournament run, a realistic possibility considering the Aztecs return the core of last season's team that lost to Tennessee in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

"Since we got to the NCAA tournament last year, we know how much harder we have to work this season to get to the later rounds," Leonard said. "Last year we set goals to win our conference tournament and go to the NCAA tournament, so to not improve on that would be a big disappointment."

### 4 Aztecs picked first in MWC preseason basketball poll

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
October 12, 2010

Any naive notion of the San Diego State men's basketball team being an underdog and sneaking up on people this season was officially extinguished Tuesday.

The Mountain West Conference released its preseason media poll. The Aztecs, who return nine lettermen and five starters from a 25-9 team, are the overwhelming pick to win.

"We didn't think we were going to sneak up on anybody anyway," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said from Denver, where the poll was announced during the conference's annual media day. "But talking about it and doing it are two different things. I hope in March we are what they say we are."

SDSU received 261 total points and 21 of 30 first-place votes in the media balloting, well ahead of BYU (five first-place votes), New Mexico (three) and UNLV (one).

The rest of the poll went like this: Colorado State, Utah, TCU, Wyoming and Air Force.

It is the third time the Aztecs have been picked to win the conference and first since 2006-07. That year, they went 10-6 in conference and finished tied for third.

"We're going to be good," Fisher said, "but BYU has three guys coming back and the predicted freshman of the year and two guys coming off missions. UNLV has all five starters coming back. New Mexico has three starters coming back and some good players coming in.

"And last year we finished behind all three of those teams, and they're all going to be better."

BYU guard Jimmer Fredette, who annually torches the Aztecs, was named pre-season conference player of the year. Two Aztecs made the preseason all-conference team, but interestingly senior forward Billy White was not one of them. Instead, it was sophomore Kawhi Leonard and senior Malcolm Thomas.

Joining them are UNLV's Tre'Von Willis and New Mexico's Dairese Gary. UCLA transfer Drew Gordon, who chose New Mexico over SDSU and becomes eligible next semester, was tabbed as newcomer of the year. BYU guard Kyle Collinsworth of Provo High (Utah) was projected as freshman of the year.

The Aztecs officially open full-team workouts on Friday.

## 5 San Diego State deals with high expectations

By Diamond Leung | ESPN.com  
October 13, 2010

San Diego State was announced today as the pick in the preseason media poll to win the Mountain West Conference, but coach Steve Fisher knows better than to feed into the hype.

He knows that never before have the Aztecs won a Division I NCAA tournament game. Despite putting scares into Tennessee last season and Indiana in 2006, they remain 0-6.

And first comes actually making the NCAA tournament. After all, the last time the Aztecs were picked to win the conference, they finished tied for third and settled for an NIT bid in 2007.

In an interview with The Mtn. Fisher talks about making sure his players get the message about dealing with expectations.

"Expectations will be exponential, too high, but that comes with the territory.

"I think they're doing OK with it. We talk about it. Don't get caught up in all your buddies telling you how good you are. Don't get caught up in your AAU coach telling you you got to shoot more. Do what we ask you to do. Help us win, and everyone will benefit including you."

That two Aztecs -- Kawhi Leonard and Malcolm Thomas -- appear on the preseason all-conference team does give San Diego State an excellent chance of being successful.

But given that three other teams in the conference made the NCAA tournament last season, if the Aztecs are going to win their first regular-season crown since 2006, it will have been earned.

## 6 SDSU opens basketball practice amid high expectations

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
October 15, 2010

San Diego State officially opened men's basketball practice Thursday afternoon, and up first was a simple three-on-three drill for perimeter players.

Kawhi Leonard was being guarded by transfer James Rahon, and on the first shot of the first practice of the season, Leonard drained a deep three-pointer over the outstretched arm of the 6-foot-5 Rahon as he was tumbling out of bounds. Rahon's team got the ball, and he immediately answered by knocking down a jumper in Leonard's face.

It was on.

Thirty seconds into the new season, the Aztecs already had a coveted advantage that few of the other 346 NCAA Division I teams can boast: fiercely competitive practices. Yes, they return all five starters. But they also return nine players who started at some point on last season's 25-9 team plus Rahon, who started 17 games as a freshman at Santa Clara before sitting out a year as a transfer.

The math: 10 guys with a legitimate claim to a starting position. Five spots.

"The guys who started last year, they're all going to want to start," Fisher said before practice. "And if these new guys are playing well, I won't hesitate to start them. I'm anxious to see how our practices look over the next month."

Within an hour, Fisher appeared to have his answer.

"I love how hard you are competing," he told his players midway through the two-hour workout. All college basketball teams practice hard. But being able to simulate game speed with your second team, being able to keep your regulars looking over their shoulder, being able to stave off complacency over the endless month of practice before the season opener, is a luxury coaches dream and drool about.

"We're much deeper this year," senior captain D.J. Gay said. "We have six bigs who could be playing anywhere in the nation battling for a couple spots. We have five guards who could be playing anywhere in the nation battling for a couple spots."

In other words: The Aztecs are loaded.

In numbers: 82.8 percent of points returning, 80.4 percent of rebounds, 86.7 percent of assists, 76.5 percent of steals, 86.5 percent of blocked shots.

With that comes expectation rarely seen in these parts. The Associated Press top-25 won't be released until late October, but most preseason publications have SDSU ranked in the low 20s and picked to win a tough Mountain West Conference that could be a four-bid league in the NCAA Tournament.

"I do like our team," Fisher said, "and I like the fact that other people like our team. I would much rather have it like this than flash back to 1999, when people asked me if we had a chance to win a conference game.

"I like our attitude. I like our togetherness."

Added Leonard, the Mountain West Conference freshman of the year who is regarded among the nation's top sophomores: "We're coming in jelling. The chemistry has built up."

If the Aztecs lacked anything last season, it was perimeter shooting, free-throw shooting and depth at the point.

All have been addressed. At Santa Clara, Rahon broke the school record for three-pointers by a freshman and was close to 80 percent at the line. And freshman point guard LaBradford Franklin can spell Gay, who averaged 34.6 minutes per game (and played 278 of a possible 280 minutes over the final seven games).

"We're already so far ahead of where we were at this time last year," Gay said. "But this is definitely something new, with all the accolades. It's something we can't let go to our heads. We come out and lose the first two games, and all that is gone.

"It's pressure, but it's a good pressure. The target is that much bigger on our backs now."

## 7 Aztecs look to meet high hopes

By Rick Hoff | North County Times  
October 15, 2010

Expect the Viejas Arena student section to make even more noise this season at San Diego State men's basketball games. That's because the Aztecs are expected to make more noise than ever on the court.

With all five starters returning from a team that won 25 games and a conference tournament and made an appearance in the NCAA tournament last season, San Diego State is the team to beat in the Mountain West Conference.

Practice for the Aztecs began Thursday, two days after they were selected as the choice to win the MWC in the conference preseason media poll. The 21 first-place votes (out of 30 cast) and the 261 total points were both the most for San Diego State in the 12-year history of the conference.

The only other schools to receive first-place nods were Brigham Young, New Mexico and Nevada-Las Vegas. There is more than one way to look at the high preseason expectations on Montezuma Mesa.

"I think it's a positive thing," said sophomore forward Kawhi Leonard, who returns after earning MWC freshman of the year and MWC tournament MVP honors last season. "Everybody on the team knows we can be the best in the conference. We're working hard and putting in the hours to be the best."

"It puts a big target on our back," senior guard D.J. Gay said of being the preseason No. 1 in the MWC. "It forces us to play even harder."

Even head coach Steve Fisher couldn't help but show his pleasure at his team's being considered as a top-25 team in the country.

"We haven't played a game yet, but I do like our team," said Fisher, beginning his 12th season at the helm of the Aztecs men. "And I like the fact that other people like our team and expect us to be good."

It's a far cry from when Fisher appeared on the scene 11 years ago after coaching eight seasons at Michigan.

"When we did this in October of 1999, I was asked if I thought we could win a conference game," Fisher recalled. "I said I thought we'd win more than one game. We didn't win any."

The Aztecs have made big strides since that 0-14 Mountain West campaign in 1999-2000. SDSU won only five games that season but have been in double digits in the win column ever since, including five straight seasons of 20 wins or more since winning the MWC regular season and tournament titles in 2005-06.

"Fisher doesn't receive enough regional or national credit for the job he has done in San Diego," reported Lindy's Sports in its 2010-11 College Basketball Preview. "Maybe this is the year that changes."

Leonard, a 6-foot-7 product of Martin Luther King High in Riverside who led SDSU last season in scoring (12.7 points per game) and rebounding (9.9 per game), feels the Aztecs will be fueled by the burning memory of 62-59 loss to Tennessee last March in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

"We learned a few things when we lost that close game to Tennessee," Leonard said. "We had bad defensive rebounding and poor free-throw shooting. It's all about executing plays."

"Coach brings it up. It was the last game of the season and we lost."

Joining Leonard on the MWC preseason all-conference team is 6-9 forward Malcolm Thomas, a senior, who averaged 10.9 points and 7.6 rebounds per game as a junior.

Gay, a 6-0 senior from Granada Hills, returns at guard and has been named by Fisher as the team captain.

"Kawhi makes the preseason first team, Malcolm makes the preseason first team, but the most important guy on our team is D.J. Gay," Fisher said. "He might not be the best player, but he is the most important for a lot of reasons."

Also returning as starters are 6-8 senior forward Billy White out of Las Vegas and 6-2 sophomore guard Chase Tapley out of Sacramento. Among the newcomers this season is James Rahon, a 6-5 sophomore guard out of Torrey Pines High, who transferred from Santa Clara.

"We have a great team coming back, and I can't wait to get on the floor with our newer weapons," said Gay. "Last year we got off to a rocky start, but we have a year together under our belt and we're already so far ahead of where we were last year as a team."

Fisher agreed with his team captain and offered up a promise.

"We were bad early on the road," Fisher said. "We got beat up at St. Mary's and we got beat up at Pacific. "This year we won't play as a team that's disjointed or doesn't know what it's doing."

The Aztecs host Point Loma Nazarene in an exhibition game Nov. 8 before tipping off the regular season Nov. 13 at Long Beach State. Two early-season games to watch are against West Coast Conference powers, including at Gonzaga on Nov. 16 and at Viejas Arena against St. Mary's on Dec. 1.

## 8 SDSU men angling for first AP hoops ranking since ... forever

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
October 27, 2010

It is hardly an exclusive club.

West Virginia Tech belongs. So does Kent State, Wayne State, Ball State and Murray State. And Beloit, Bucknell, Hamline, Canisius, Centenary, Duquesne, Niagara, Siena, Winthrop, Bowling Green, Louisiana-Lafayette, Wisconsin-Green Bay and West Texas A&M. And Maryland Eastern Shore.

The weekly Associated Press men's basketball rankings have been around since 1948 – first as a top 20, then as a top 10, now as a top 25 – and 195 different schools have appeared in them. UCLA has appeared in 651 of a possible 1009 polls. Kentucky has appeared 745 times. North Carolina has appeared a record 772.

And San Diego State?

Zero.

That could change Thursday, when the AP releases its preseason poll and SDSU has a decent shot at making its long overdue debut in the oldest and most prestigious set of basketball rankings. USD has never been ranked by the AP, either, making an Aztecs appearance the first by a Division I school from San Diego.

SDSU also is the only Mountain West Conference school never to be AP ranked.

"It's something as a kid, you want to play for a top 25 team one day," senior captain D.J. Gay said. "It would be something nice to check off our goal list."

Added coach Steve Fisher: "We are now perceived to have a program. When they start talking about good programs, I think we are now mentioned in the same breath as some of the others, and that makes me feel good. And obviously, the fact that we return five starters from a team that won 25 games should catch everybody's attention."

It's going to be close, though. The Associated Press poll consists of 60-odd media voters from across the nation, and only a handful come from Mountain West Conference cities. The Aztecs were included in five preseason polls from other publications or websites, appearing as high as No. 21 in ESPN.com's preseason rankings by Andy Katz.

But the USA Today coaches' top 25 was released last week, and SDSU was the first team listed in the dreaded fine print at the bottom: Others receiving votes.

"I'm biased," Fisher said. "I see our kids every day. So yes, I would rank us. I don't see anybody else, so this is one man's very slanted, biased view. But I think we're good enough to be in the top 25."

Ed Graney, a former Union-Tribune sports writer who covered the Aztecs and is an SDSU alum, agrees. He is now a columnist for the Las Vegas Review-Journal and has Nevada's only AP men's basketball vote. He put the Aztecs at 19th on his preseason ballot.

"They have the most experienced head coach in terms of how to win games in that league," Graney said. "They have the league's best NBA prospect in Kawhi Leonard. They have one of the nation's best front lines. They have a senior point guard (Gay) who by all accounts is set to have his best season. They have really good depth."

"And I'm fairly certain they have a sports information director who will kill more trees than in the Black Forest with press releases on the team's accomplishments."

Perception is a huge part of the AP poll, especially among media voters who don't (and, really, who can't) see the majority of the 347 Div. I teams play on a regular basis. And it doesn't help being nestled in a corner of the country with little basketball tradition.

"They haven't done anything in the NCAA tournament," Graney said of the Aztecs, who have yet to win a game there, including last season's wrenching 62-59 first-round loss to Tennessee. "They haven't done enough on the biggest stage for people to pay that much attention to them."

"But most of the voters probably saw the Tennessee game and know they could have won it, and all they heard during the telecast was that they were returning all five starters. I think that game planted the seed in voters' minds that maybe they should be ranked this year."

Their best chance might be in Thursday's preseason poll. After that, they'll have to earn their way into the top 25 by navigating a cupcake-less nonconference schedule.

They open with five straight road games, including a Nov. 16 date at Gonzaga, where road teams hardly ever win. The first regular-season AP poll doesn't come out until the following week.

"When the coaches' poll came out and we just missed, it was like, 'Oh, man,'" junior forward Tim Shelton said. "There was a little bit of a disappointment. We want the ranking, definitely, but at the same time you almost would rather have them not rank us (in the preseason) so we can work that much harder.

"So we can have that extra motivation."

## 9 SDSU finally makes debut in AP men's basketball poll

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
October 28, 2010

Now there are 196 schools that have appeared in the Associated Press Top 25 rankings for men's basketball.

After four decades of Division I basketball, San Diego State finally has joined the ranked and file, landing at No. 25 in the AP preseason poll released Thursday. It also marks the first time any San Diego school has appeared in the oldest and most prestigious poll, which began in 1949 and on Thursday issued its 1010th set of weekly rankings.

"Hopefully, we're not a one-hit wonder," said SDSU coach Steve Fisher, entering his 12th season on Montezuma Mesa, "that the only time we were ranked in my tenure here was on Oct. 28, 2010 ... I told the kids: 'Let's climb up higher.'"

Duke is No. 1, as expected, but Mountain West Conference rival Brigham Young was No. 24 despite practically every preseason publication (as well as the league's media poll) picking the Aztecs to win the conference.

The Aztecs are hardly complaining, though. The last spot in the Top 25 certainly beats their position in the USA Today coaches' preseason poll, where they were the first team listed in "others receiving votes," which is sort of like finishing fourth at an Olympics.

SDSU also becomes, according to folks who track these things, just the seventh team since 1974 to make its AP rankings debut in a preseason poll. The last team to do it was Gonzaga in 2000.

Good omen: The Zags went to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament that season.

"It feels great," said senior forward Billy White, one of five starters returning from a 25-9 team. "I've been here four years, and it's a dream come true. The players are excited. The coaching staff is excited. The whole school is excited."

Added Tim Shelton, a fourth-year junior: "For the players and me, it's nice. Pre-season accolades are always nice. But at the same time, it kind of just means that we'll have a bigger target on our backs now."

The AP poll is compiled by 64 media members across the country, with 25 points awarded for a first-place vote, 24 for a second-place vote and so on. The Aztecs finished with 158 points, behind BYU (198) but comfortably ahead of Wisconsin (126) and Texas (107).

Of the 61 ballots made available for viewing, the Aztecs appeared on 37. Nine voters put them in their Top 20, including one -- Mark Berman of The Roanoke Times in Virginia -- at No. 13.

John Feinstein of NPR had SDSU at No. 20, Seth Davis of Sports Illustrated at No. 21, and Dick Vitale of ABC/ESPN at No. 22.

The hard part for the Aztecs will be staying there longer than the football team did the last time it was ranked, in November 1995. The Aztecs were upset by Wyoming the following week and haven't in the AP poll since, their 249-week drought being longer than all but 11 Division I schools.

The next AP basketball poll is scheduled for Nov. 15. The following night SDSU plays at Gonzaga, which is ranked No. 12 and which almost never loses at home.

The Aztecs, in fact, don't play at Viejas Arena against a Division I opponent until Dec. 1, opening with five games away from home that include three opponents who won 20-plus games last season and a fourth, Long Beach State on Nov. 13, that is among the favorites to win its conference.

"Now people are saying, 'They're good,' instead of, 'I wonder if they'll be good,'" Fisher said. "I'm sure we will have everybody's attention when we play them ... But the true testament of whether we're as good as we think we are is will we be ranked at the end of the season?"

### TICKETING UPDATE

SDSU has already surpassed last year's season ticket numbers, according to athletic department officials. Single-game tickets go on sale Monday at 9 a.m. The Aztecs' nonconference schedule includes games at Viejas Arena against St. Mary's, USD, Wichita State and UC Santa Barbara.

## 10 It's not so far-fetched ... Aztecs just might be NCAA's hoops surprise

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 6, 2010

The question by itself, out there alone on Dick Vitale Island, seems almost absurd, because for the final answer so many unusual and tremendous things must happen, including luck. And when it comes to good fortune, San Diego State's sports teams fit in somewhere between Pete Best and Wally Pipp.

But here goes, anyway: Can the Aztecs men's basketball team win an NCAA championship?

It's difficult to even type. But in this case, as we approach the 2010-11 season, I defer to Robert Kennedy and say: "Why not?"

Yeah. Why not the Aztecs? Yeah. They should put it on T-shirts.

Tucked away in the southernmost innards of Southern California, SDSU as of yet cannot be considered a baskets bastion, hardly a Duke, Kentucky, North Carolina, Michigan State or any of today's perennial powers.

But, tell me: Is Butler? Do you even know where Butler is? Do you think it's a college for aspiring manservants? Last spring, the Bulldogs of Indianapolis, with a student population of 4,400, reached the NCAA Tournament's Final Two before losing by a pair of points in the finale to mighty Duke (which really wasn't mighty, but mighty enough, which is how it works these days).

The only way to judge these Aztecs is by their 2009-10, going 25-9, winning the Mountain West Conference Tournament and reaching the NCAAs, and what they have returning from a very good club.

And the answer is they didn't do quite enough and they return plenty. Steve Fisher's team, as they say, is loaded and primed as it prepares to open its season with an exhibition at home Monday against Point Loma Nazarene.

I was sitting there in Dunkin' Donuts Arena in the first round of the NCAA Midwest Regional last March, when the Aztecs went chest to chest with Tennessee in Providence, R.I. I can see State guard Chase Tapley missing a perfectly designed three-point attempt from the corner that might have won it, and sensational freshman Kawhi Leonard throwing up an air-ball three at the buzzer that would have tied a game that ended 62-59 in the Vols' favor.

The Aztecs didn't flinch at the only team in the country that defeated both Kansas and Kentucky. And Tennessee came within a point — 60-59 — of beating Michigan State in the Midwest final and reaching the Final Four. San Diego State was every stinking bit as good as Tennessee.

Which means, with health and luck and expected growth, the Aztecs must be given at least a puncher's chance. They are long, they are terribly athletic, capable of defending like madmen, rebounding fools, and, perhaps most important, experienced in every important way. And last year's bugaboo — shooting, at the line and from the field — very well may be corrected.

Returning are forwards Billy White, Malcolm Thomas and Leonard, perhaps the nation's best rebounder, and point guard D.J. Gay. White, Thomas and Gay are

"SDSU also becomes, according to folks who track these things, just the seventh team since 1974 to make its AP rankings debut in a preseason poll. The last team to do it was Gonzaga in 2000."

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "SDSU finally makes debut in AP men's basketball poll")

seniors, as is center Brian Carlwell and forward Mehdi Cheriet (redshirt last year). All have either started or played quite a bit.

If hard-luck junior forward Tim Shelton, who can really play, can give quality minutes with his bum knees, he only adds talent and basketball savvy to the equation. Sophomore guard James Rahon, a transfer from Santa Clara who red-shirted last year, gives the Aztecs what they so desperately need — an outside shooting threat. Tapley returns. Highly touted true freshman LaBradford Franklin, out of Temecula, gives Fisher depth at point guard, where there was none a season ago.

"From our perspective, we have a team that not only can play with anybody, but win," says Fisher, about to begin his 11th season on Montezuma Mesa. "That's realistic and a good feeling, but we still have to play."

Fisher, who won a national championship while at Michigan, knows what it takes, and he also knows the climate has changed dramatically since his famous 1989-90 season with the Wolverines. A lot of schools can win it now, and State is ranked in the Top 25 on nearly every preseason poll.

"No question, I would agree 100 percent," Fisher says. "That's our expectations. I've been optimistic in the past — that's the way I am — but I'm not afraid to say we're going to be pretty good and not worry about the consequences."

It's no secret that, now that the best players can jump to the NBA one year removed from high school, tournament experience and leadership from seniors who remained in college have become so much more valuable. Not only does State offer experience and senior leadership, but talented, Tournament-tested experience and senior leadership.

"It's a veteran group, it really is," Fisher says. "Experience with quality players is always a huge plus, and we've got that."

"We'll shoot better — how much better I don't know — but if you zone us and pack it in, we can bring in a couple guys who can shoot the ball. We'll watch Tim Shelton's knees closely, but he's a lot better now than he was last year, a key for us. If we can stay healthy, we can be pretty good."

Good enough? Who knows? But they'll be hard to play and fun to watch.

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## 11 Aztecs Finally Arrive in AP Top 25 Under Fisher

By Bernie Wilson | Associated Press  
November 11, 2010

A dozen seasons after Steve Fisher inherited one of the worst basketball programs in the country, his San Diego State Aztecs have finally arrived.

Ranked in The Associated Press poll for the first time — they're No. 25 — the Aztecs are ready to begin what they hope is their most successful season ever.

The Aztecs return all five starters and nine letter-winners from a team that won the Mountain West Conference tournament and finished 25-9 after losing to Tennessee in the NCAA tournament.

The next logical progression is to actually win a game in the NCAA tournament. The 62-59 loss to Tennessee dropped the Aztecs to 0-6 in the NCAAs.

"I think we've got an opportunity to take that next step," Fisher said. "We need to, before I get out of here, find a way to win in the tournament. We've got a team that's capable of doing that. But there are a lot of teams like us. They need to perform to get there. If they can get there, they can win and make a lot of noise."

Fisher, of course, doesn't want to look past the season opener at Long Beach State on Saturday. Or the rest of a tough non-conference schedule that includes a game at No. 12 Gonzaga next Tuesday.

It's just that he's built up the program to the point that long-suffering fans expect the Aztecs to eventually get that elusive NCAA win. Three of the school's six NCAA appearances have come under Fisher, as well as its first five postseason wins, all in the NIT.

"That's something that we haven't done as a program, is win an NCAA game," senior guard D.J. Gay said. "That's probably the highest goal on our list is to get back in and win a game, not just to get there."

Starting forwards Malcolm Thomas and Billy White also are seniors, while guard Chase Tapley and forward Kawhi Leonard are sophomores. Leonard was the Mountain West Conference Freshman of the Year and MVP of the conference tournament. He and Thomas are on the preseason all-league team.

"I like looking down the roster at five seniors," Fisher said. "I like looking at five starters from last year, two of whom are seasoned sophomores, Kawhi and Tapley. We're better served when we go on the road, especially early. We stubbed our toes so badly out of gate last year on the road. I hope this year we'll come out a little better prepared, and I'm positive we will. We're still a group that likes one another. We have some good, hard — and I mean hard — practices where go at each other right away. We have depth. We have a lot of people who can play."

That's why the Aztecs were able to crack the Top 25.

"To be the first to do anything in a positive light is something special," Gay said. "We're all excited, the fans are excited. We have the potential to have a very special thing here."

Fisher was accustomed to high rankings in his days as coach at Michigan, where he won the national championship in 1989 and made two other championship game appearances.

"We feel as if we've earned the honor and respect we've been given," Fisher said.

In some unwanted publicity, police are investigating a 30-year-old man's claim that he was jumped by four or five SDSU basketball players at a downtown nightclub early Saturday. No arrests have been made.

Police expect to turn over the case in the next few days to the City Attorney's Office, which will decide whether anyone will be charged.

Fisher took over the Aztecs in 1999, two years after he was fired at Michigan. He inherited a team that won only four games the previous season while going winless on the road. His first team went 5-23, including 0-14 in the Mountain West and, once again, winless away from San Diego.

The Aztecs have now turned in five straight 20-win seasons that culminated with postseason berths. Two seasons ago, Fisher took the Aztecs to the NIT semifinals at Madison Square Garden.

"We had to work smart," Fisher said about turning around the program. "It took the willingness to not buy into what some people were saying: 'You can't recruit him, he's too good for you.' We knocked on the door of every good player in California. Sometimes we didn't get them on the first crack, but we might have gotten them on the bounceback. We've really worked diligently to sell our program and ourselves and what San Diego State has to offer. Then, when you win a little bit, that helps. That's what we've done. We've hung in there."

The 65-year-old Fisher isn't in a hurry to leave.

"Every job I've had, I felt like it very well could be the job where I finished up," he said. "I came here with no notion that, 'Boy, I hope we get good in five years so I can get something better.' I've got an awfully good thing right where we are. We love living in San Diego. I'm at a stage of my life where there might be something that would pay more money but I love where I am in my career and what we're doing here. The nice thing about it is I get excited every day going into the gym, thinking there's more to do before we get out of here."

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## 12 SDSU survives tough environment, game in basketball opener

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 13, 2010

Understand one thing about San Diego State's basketball season opener at Long Beach State on Saturday afternoon:

This was not some ease-into-the-season, pad-therecord, play-everyone-on-the-bench, beat-up-on-an-overmatched-Big-West-team sort of affair.

This was the largest crowd (5,143) ever to watch a sporting event in the Walter Pyramid, Homecoming festivities lubing up fans in the parking lot, "Beach the Aztecs" cheer cards, the "Monson Maniacs" student section standing and screaming in their yellow T-shirts.

This was a portly guy whipping everyone into a frenzy by going shirtless and jiggling his stomach to the rhythms of the pep band.

This was a physical, nasty, talented Long Beach State team that starts four juniors and a senior. This was 20 NBA scouts in attendance. This was March in November.

"A tough, hard game," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said.

Which makes their 81-65 victory that much more significant, that much sweeter. You have to go into the biggest beehive to get the best honey.

"I like how we came together as a team," senior Malcolm Thomas said. "Nobody's selfish. Everyone just wants to win."

And nobody's less selfish than Thomas.

A tight game swung in a mere 2½ minutes midway through the second half, on consecutive SDSU possessions that all ended the same way: three-pointer from the left side by James Rahon, three-pointer from the left side by Rahon, three-pointer from the left side by Rahon. A 56-55 lead became 65-55 and, in essence, broke the 49ers' spirit.

Rahon, a sophomore transfer playing his first official game for SDSU, drained the deep jumpers. But they were set up by Thomas's passing from the post, a newfound sophistication to his game that adds a formidable dimension to the Aztec attack.

All three plays also started the same way, with the ball being dumped to Thomas on the right block. The 49ers ran a second defender to double-team Thomas, and Thomas calmly found the open man each time, including one 30-foot laser across the defense directly to Rahon.

Thomas matched his career high with six assists — a huge number for a 6-foot-9 post man — and probably had just as many "hockey assists," where you make the pass that sets up the pass that sets up the basket.

"In practice we work on that, with people doubling from every different position," said Thomas, who also had nine points and 10 rebounds. "I felt like it was all familiar. It felt just like practice."

Rahon was 4-of-7 behind the arc and his 14 points accounted for SDSU's enire bench scoring, and fellow guard D.J. Gay was 4-of-5 en route to 20 points. What helped keep Long Beach in the game, though, was the rest of the Aztecs, who fired away at will from the perimeter and made a combined one of 13 attempts.

"Everybody is shooting threes now," said Gay, whose team next plays at No. 12 Gonzaga on Tuesday. "As the season goes along, we'll see who keeps shooting and who stops shooting."

Maybe the game's most shocking statistic belonged to Kawhi Leonard: zero.

That's how many rebounds he had in the first half.

Fisher noticed it on the stat sheet as they were leaving the locker room, pulled aside his sophomore rebounding machine and said: "Kawhi, what the heck is this? Criminally, I don't care if they're sending five people after you. You have to rebound the ball."

Message received. Leonard never came off the floor in the second half, and grabbed 12 rebounds to go with his game-high 21 points.

#### NOTES

About 1,000 SDSU fans made the trip north ... The previous sports attendance record at the Pyramid was 5,118 for a women's volleyball game in 1998. (The Misty May-led 49ers went undefeated and won the NCAA title that year) ... Another key stat: The Aztecs held Long Beach State to 27.6 percent shooting in the final 20 minutes, including just 1-of-11 behind the arc ... T.J. Robinson led the hosts with 19 points and nine rebounds ... Long Beach shot 11 first-half free throws to SDSU's one and finished with a 19-7 advantage ... Sophomore Alec Williams did not sit on the bench and is expected to redshirt this season.

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### Sharpshooter could be spice this team has recently lacked

By Tim Sullivan | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 14, 2010

The recent history of San Diego State basketball shows a surplus of staple items and a shortage of spice.

Meet James Rahon, the missing ingredient.

"He's a guy you expect to make that shot, not hope he makes it,' Fisher said Saturday evening at the Walter Pyramid."

- Tim Sullivan (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Sharpshooter could be spice this team has recently lacked")

Rahon is the transfer guard who looks more like a god-send, the zone-busing shotmaker who makes the Aztecs that much more dangerous by forcing defenses to play them that much more straight-up. He's the guy who disperses traffic around the basket with reliable rainbow jumpers from the outer limits. He's the guy Steve Fisher only had during practice a year ago.

"He's a guy you expect to make that shot, not hope he makes it," Fisher said Saturday evening at the Walter Pyramid. "Not that we don't have others that we feel can make it, but Rahon is one of those guys who's done it since (Torrey Pines) high school; who knows he's going to make every shot he takes."

This is something new. This would seem to be something significant. Though the Aztecs opened their season unevenly Saturday before pulling away to an 81-65 victory over Long Beach State, Rahon's long-range shooting came as a game-changing, expectations-raising revelation.

The only substitute to score for the Aztecs, Rahon came off the bench to contribute 14 points — 11 of them during a decisive stretch in the second half. If the hot hand Rahon demonstrated is a renewable asset, the Aztecs might still be playing late in March.

After making his regular-season SDSU debut with 13 relatively inconspicuous minutes in the first half, Rahon returned to the floor with SDSU trailing by a point with 13:53 remaining in regulation. He then sank four shots in rapid succession — three of them from beyond the three-point arc — to turn a nail-biter into something more manicured and much more manageable.

Yahoo's Greg Anthony thinks the Aztecs have the best frontcourt in the country. Imagine the elbow room Kawhi Leonard, Malcolm Thomas and Billy White can gain with a more potent threat on the perimeter.

"He brings something that we lacked last year and that's three-point shooting," said D.J. Gay, the Aztecs' point guard. "Him being on this team and being on the court with us is going to do nothing but not allow teams to double (team). They tried doubling the post, but every time they doubled, we kicked out and Rahon knocked down big shots for us."

Well, not every single time. Rahon missed three of his seven three-point tries against Long Beach. But he shoots with the confidence of a kid who sank better than 40 percent of his threes as a skinny freshman at Santa Clara, and believes he is now better.

Rahon has added 20 pounds since his freshman year, and thinks the added bulk has helped expand his effective range.

"I've noticed it's really helped my shot a lot," he said. "Having my legs under me has given me more range and more touch with the shot."

Fisher says there is more to Rahon's game than his catch-and-shoot specialty; Rahon is battling Chase Tapley for a spot in the Aztecs' starting lineup. Still, if Rahon is to remain a supporting player, his specific skill set gives him the ability to steal the show.

Last year, SDSU ranked 241st nationally in three-point shooting at .317, and four of the six Aztecs who attempted at least 20 three-pointers failed to make as many as 30 percent.

Shot selection was still an issue on Saturday — other than Rahon and Gay, the Aztecs were 1-for-13 from threepoint range — but some guys stand to lose their privileges beyond the arc unless their marksmanship improves. As Brazilian basketball star Oscar Schmidt liked to say, some guys are piano players and other guys are piano movers.

"I just do what the coaches tell me to do," Rahon said. "What the coaches tell me to do is if I get an open look, take it. In the first half, I didn't get too many, but in the second half, having the great players that we have gets me a lot more open looks and I happened to be open a few more times and was able to knock them down."

Fisher had seen Rahon as a custom fit when he was still playing for Torrey Pines, recruited him aggressively, and "had to bite my lip and tongue when he told me he was going to Santa Clara."

"Sometimes kids make decisions," Fisher said. "I think he said, 'Getting away from home would be good for me,' and fortunately for us and I think maybe for him, he said, 'Hey, I want to come back.'"

Rahon's return to competition coincided with Long Beach State's homecoming. Both of his parents are Long Beach State products; father Steve a former 49ers football player.

On this day, though, the family loyalties were undivided and richly rewarded. James Rahon was that good.

"We all knew what he could do," D.J. Gay said. "But now the fans and other teams are going to be able to see it this year. He's a great asset and he's going to be a major player for us."

#### 14 Rahon, Aztecs justify their hype in opener

By Forrest Lee | North County Times  
November 14, 2010

Playing as a nationally ranked team for the first time in school history, the San Diego State men's basketball team showed off its new sharpshooter and its veteran guile.

With returning starters Kawhi Leonard and D.J. Gay leading the way and new addition James Rahon showing the perimeter shooting skills the Aztecs have lacked, No. 25 San Diego State pulled away from pesky Long Beach State late for a 81-65 victory in its season opener Saturday.

Leonard finished with 21 points and 12 rebounds, and Gay added 20 points, but it was the clutch shooting of Rahon, the former Torrey Pines High star and a transfer from Santa Clara, that had folks buzzing.

"We all knew what he could do, but now the fans and others teams will be able to see this year," Gay said of Rahon, a sophomore who scored 14 points while playing 27 minutes in a reserve role. "He brings something that we lacked last year, and that's 3-point shooting. With him on this team means we have a great asset."

Rahon nailed three consecutive 3-pointers midway through the second half as the Aztecs used an 11-0 run to turn a 55-54 deficit into a commanding 65-55 lead with 6 minutes, 49 seconds to play. Rahon finished 4-for-7 from behind the 3-point arc.

"It feels nice to quiet the crowd a little bit, especially in a type of game like that when we needed to score," Rahon said.

Aztecs Coach Steve Fisher couldn't resist recalling how he tried to recruit Rahon to San Diego State from Torrey Pines.

"No one recruited him harder than I did when he was in high school," Fisher said. "I had to bite my lip and tongue when he told me he was going to Santa Clara.

"But Rahon is one of those guys who knows he's going to make every shot he takes. He gets a little bit of an opportunity, he can get it off very quickly."

After Rahon's 3-point barrage, the 49ers (0-1) cut the Aztecs' lead to 66-62 on a layup by Casper Ware with 5:48 remaining. Gay, Leonard and Billy White then keyed a 15-3 run to cap the victory.

"This is a great win for us," Leonard said. "It's always a good thing to get the first win to start the season off on a high note. (Long Beach State) is a good team, and this is a good win for us to get on the road. I'm excited. It's going to be a great season."

Leonard said the Aztecs' rebounding and transition game was the difference in the victory.

"The first half we weren't rebounding good as a team, so we really couldn't get out on our transition game," Leonard said. "The second half we started picking it up more on the defensive end, stopping them and that helped us run a lot."

Leonard, who had 13 of his points in the first half on 6-of-10 shooting, converted a 3-point play with 3:51 remaining for a 40-32 lead, the Aztecs' biggest of the half. But Long Beach closed with a 10-2 run, punctuated by T.J. Robinson's dunk with 5 seconds left to tie the game at 42.

#### 15 NBA scouts checking on Aztecs' Leonard

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 15, 2010

The New York Knicks have been to practice. So have the Denver Nuggets, Cleveland Cavaliers and Phoenix Suns. And the Pacers, Raptors, Hornets, Jazz and Thunder.

The Bulls came on a Friday night a couple weeks back.

Another team got lost trying to find Viejas Arena.

If watching Kawhi Leonard snatch rebounds over unsuspecting opponents with catcher's mits disguised as hands isn't enough to convince you he's a major NBA prospect, the fact that NBA scouts are regularly showing up at San Diego State practices in October and November should.

Scouts wait for the season to watch marginal prospects in games, where they can evaluate two or three players in one night.

Big-time guys, they make a special trip to see at practice.

"When multiple scouts come — and we've had more here in the first 20 practices than in the last few years combined — that tells you something," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said. "There's a growing buzz out there that, 'We better get in there and take a look at this guy.'"

All of which means: If you want to see the 6-foot-7, 225-pound sophomore play for SDSU, you might not want to wait until next season.

About the only person who seems completely unmoved by the hype, to the realization that at this time next year he could be a millionaire, is Leonard himself. He is quiet, shy, unassuming, humble, reserved. He speaks in almost a whisper and he quickly changes the subject from three letters (NBA) to four (SDSU).

"I'm just out here focusing on the team every day," he says. "That's all I'm worried about. Those scouts aren't in my mind at all."

A cliché, yes. But you get the distinct impression it might also be the truth.

"He doesn't pay too much attention to the media or all the NBA talk," says his roommate, Aztecs forward Malcolm Thomas. "There was one time he was on the cover of something and I told him, 'Hey, Kawhi, did you see this?' He had no idea.

"He just wants to get better."

These are the kinds of anecdotes scouts come to practice to hear or see.

"We talk with assistant coaches, trainers, managers, the strength and conditioning coach, to get a little better feel for a player," said one scout, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the NBA prohibits them from discussing underclassmen. "Sometimes when you talk to just the head coach, they'll clean it

"If watching Kawhi Leonard snatch rebounds over unsuspecting opponents with catcher's mits disguised as hands isn't enough to convince you he's a major NBA prospect, the fact that NBA scouts are regularly showing up at San Diego State practices in October and November should."

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "NBA scouts checking on Aztecs' Leonard")



up for you. We want to find out about his work ethic, does he get after it in the weight room, how much he loves the game, does he like his teammates.

"They'll keep it real for you."

And his take on Leonard?

"Pretty impressive," the scout said. "When people see how quick he is off his feet, how big his hands are, his work ethic, they're going to fall in love with him. We can teach him the rest of it."

Most scouts currently peg Leonard as a late first- or early second-round pick if he enters 2011 NBA draft after his sophomore season. But they also note that, if he and the No. 25 Aztecs have the type of breakout season they expect, his stock will soar.

Leonard met with Fisher last spring to discuss his future, and Fisher advised him that his game wasn't ready.

Leonard nodded and spent the summer in an empty gym upgrading his ball handling, the arch and range on his jumper, his free-throw accuracy and his help defense.

Check, check, check, check.

Leonard had a game-high 21 points and, most notably, all of his 12 rebounds in the second half in Saturday's season-opening win at Long Beach State. It did not go unnoticed. Scouts from 20 NBA teams were there, and another big turnout is expected for Tuesday night's game at No. 12 Gonzaga.

Fisher will meet with Leonard again after the season.

"I don't know everything, but I know more than most of the people out there," said Fisher, who had his share of NBA prospects in 15 years at Michigan, among them 1993 No. 1 pick Chris Webber. "I told Kawhi, 'Trust in me, and I'm going to give you the kind of advice based on fact.' There are a lot of people who think they know what they're talking about, and they don't."

Fisher's advice for a college sophomore: "If you're projected as a (top-14) lottery pick, I think you have to seriously consider going. If you're a first-round draft pick, you've got a decision to make. If you're not a first-round draft pick, I don't think you should go."

Leonard appears to be listening.

"He told me, 'When the time is right, you'll know,'" Leonard said. "I'm taking his approach. And I'm tuning everybody else out."

## 16 Aztecs upend Zags

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 17, 2010

Here's how you know you've arrived in the college basketball universe, how you have become relevant:

When the loneliest job in America is working the concession stands at Gonzaga's McCarthy Athletic Center.

Usually, the lines are bustling at Gonzaga basketball games. Usually, their beloved Bulldogs are comfortably ahead in the second half, blowing out yet another opponent in "The Kennel," and fans are milling around in the concourse, cheerily getting a hot dog and a Coke, maybe some popcorn or a pretzel.

Not Tuesday night.

San Diego State recorded arguably its biggest victory in 90 years of basketball on Montezuma Mesa, not only slaying No. 11 Gonzaga 79-76 on national television but doing it in a place – in a veritable cauldron – where the Zags almost never lose. The concourse was empty all night.

The No. 25 Aztecs have defeated higher-ranked teams (they beat No. 8 New

Mexico on a neutral floor last season), but never someone ranked so high in so difficult a venue to win. It was just the fifth loss for the Zags in their last 95 games on campus.

The last time the Aztecs beat a ranked team on the road? Thirty-two years and 33 games ago.

"A nice, signature win for the program," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said.

"It's just a glimpse of how good we are, how far we've come," captain D.J. Gay said outside a jubilant locker room. "The upside for us is endless. We're going to be as good as we want to be."

The hero was senior forward Billy White, who had become almost a forgotten man with the NBA hype surrounding Kawhi Leonard and the marked improvement of Malcolm Thomas. White equaled his previous career high (28 points) with five minutes left and finished with 30 on 14-of-18 shooting and 2-for-2 behind the arc.

Eighteen points came in the second half, including 11 straight over a mere three minutes with the game perilously hanging in the balance.

Equally amazing was this stat line: Thomas, the key figure in the season opening win against Long Beach State, fouled out with zero points and one rebound.

"Malcolm was in foul trouble," White said. "Coach looked at all of us and said, 'You have to step it up a little more.' And that's what I did."

The Aztecs (2-0) nearly didn't pull it off. Leading 77-69 with three minutes left, they had two straight turnovers, a missed free throw and an offensive foul. A driving layup by Steven Gray (35 points) closed the SDSU lead to 77-76 with 23.6 seconds left, and the Zags immediately fouled Leonard.

All the long hours in the gym shooting free throws paid off. Leonard rattled in both free throws, Gray turned the ball over at the other end, and the unthinkable had happened at The Kennel.

**"They were every bit as good as I thought,' Gonzaga coach Mark Few said, 'and I think they're a Sweet 16-and-beyond type team. They don't seem to have a weakness just yet ... They play like a bunch of seniors who are hungry to have a great season.'"**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs upend Zags")

"They were every bit as good as I thought," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said, "and I think they're a Sweet 16-and-beyond type team. They don't seem to have a weakness just yet ... They play like a bunch of seniors who are hungry to have a great season.

"They're in for a special season."

The game was part of the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic, a 12-team tournament that culminates with a Final Four in Kansas City, Mo., next week. The Aztecs won't be going, though, since the event pre-determined that the four marquee teams – Gonzaga, No. 1 Duke, No. 3 Kansas State and Marquette – would advance to K.C. for promotional purposes no matter what happened in the preliminary rounds.

But the Aztecs weren't in any mood to complain. This is a school that until three weeks ago had never appeared in the 61-year history of the Associated Press college basketball rankings.

The Aztecs led 6-0 early and by 10 in the first half before the Zags clawed back, opening the second half with a 7-0 run to take the first lead of the game at 44-42. And their last lead.

Gay drained a three-pointer 14 seconds later, and the Aztecs never trailed again.

"They slugged us a couple times in the jaw," Fisher said, "but we righted ourselves and made some big baskets right after that."

Aside from White's monster game, the Aztecs beat the Zags (2-1) with two Bs: the boards and the bench.

They held a 39-29 rebounding advantage and finished with 18 offensive rebounds against a team that starts bookend 7-footers. And they got 22 points off the bench (to nine for Gonzaga), including 12 from James Rahon and eight from Brian Carlwell.

The 6-foot-11, 300-pound Carlwell has played sporadically since transferring from Illinois, but he was a major factor Tuesday with Thomas picking up two early fouls and then two more in a 17-second span moments into the second half. Carlwell played 14 minutes, also contributing two rebounds, two assists and a steal.

The Aztecs gained respect from the Zags faithful on more than just the scoreboard.

With tents.

The "Zombie Naion" student section is general admission seating across one entire sideline and holds about 1,500. First you line up several hours to get a ticket. That just gets you in. For the biggest games, students also camp out for several days outside the McCarthy Athletic Center so they can secure the best seats.

Not every opponent is deemed worthy of a mini-tent city, but the Aztecs and their No. 25 ranking was. The first tents went up at midnight Sunday and by the next morning there were 43.

Each tent holds a place in line for you and six buddies. There are periodic checks to make sure you are there; if not, you get five minutes and then you're booted to the back of the line.

Sunday night was a little chilly but unevenful. Monday night, the wind started to howl.

"There were something like 28 mph winds and our front (tent) post broke," said John Williams, a sophomore from Phoenix who secured a seat in the front row. "Then it started raining and it got wet inside our tent."

The real chill, of course, didn't come until Tuesday night – inside the McCarthy Athletic Center.

#### NOTES

The last time the Aztecs beat a ranked team on the road was a 77-75 win against No. 17 USF on Dec. 5, 1978 ... The win was the 200th by Fisher at SDSU. It is the 17th overall victory against an AP Top 25 team, seven of them coming in the 12-year Fisher era ... Fisher had never been to a game at Gonzaga, but two of his players had: Thomas (Pepperdine) and Rahon (Santa Clara) played here in the West Coast Conference before transferring ... Season tickets have been selling briskly, and SDSU says fewer than 100 are available in the reserved seating area at the \$99 price ... The CBE Classic had its logos plastered all over the floor. It even signed a ball contract with "The Rock" ball and mandated that teams play with it. SDSU didn't practice with the new synthetic leather ball until Tuesday morning's shoot-around ... The Aztecs complete the remainder of the CBE Classic with three games in as many days at Oxford, Ohio, beginning Saturday against Wisconsin-Green Bay.

#### 17

##### Fisher's Aztecs corral needed pair of big men

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 18, 2010

College basketball coaches are always telling their players to focus on the present, to take one game at a time. They just can't practice what they preach.

The sobering reality of the recruiting trail is that you always have one eye on the future, and the morning after an historic upset of No. 11 Gonzaga in the second game of the 2010-11 season, the San Diego State coaches were talking about 2011-12.

The early signing window closed Wednesday, and the Aztecs landed a pair of lean 6-foot-8 forwards to fill what figures to be massive holes in their front line next season: Deshawn Stephens of Santa Monica College and Kevin Young, who last played at Loyola Marymount. Both will have two years of eligibility at SDSU. Neither is your "traditional" high school recruit, which speaks to lack of talent in the 2011 senior class – particularly among big men – and the ability of the Aztecs coaches to find alternatives.

"You had to be creative this year," said assistant coach Justin Hutson, who serves as SDSU's recruiting coordinator and has been so instrumental in putting together the current roster. "As far as high school, there were only two or three kids that we even recruited who had size, and we didn't get them. It was definitely a challenging year."

Solution: One player (Stephens) who didn't play high school basketball and another (Young) who is not playing anywhere this fall.

Stephens grew six inches after high school and has blossomed at Santa Monica College, where he is rated among the top JC posts on the West Coast (he averaged 7.4 points and 7.3 rebounds last season). He originally gave an oral commitment to Utah State, even going on local radio there to talk about his decision, before changing his mind and pledging his allegiance to the Aztecs.

"He can pass it, he can handle it, he can shoot it," Hutson said of Stephens, "and he is very long and athletic in the mode that we like. Is he going to have a learning curve? Of course. But we're happy to have him, and I think he has a chance to be pretty good."

Young was granted his release from Loyola Marymount last spring after being a regular starter, averaging 32 minutes and about 10 points. He broke the school record for rebounds, steals and blocked shots by a freshman.

Hutson said the Aztecs knew he had left; they just had to find him.

Young surfaced at Barstow Community College, taking classes and serving as an assistant coach with the men's basketball team. Because he isn't taking a full course load this semester, NCAA rules prevent him from signing a national letter of intent. Instead he signed a "scholarship agreement."

LMU coach Max Good raved about the long, lanky and freakishly athletic Young.

"To be honest, Kevin wants to play 45 minutes of a 40-minute game," Good said. "He goes that hard. He's the Energizer bunny. I really think Kevin can help most teams in the country in some way, shape or form. There aren't many better run-and-jump athletes in the country."

The need for bigs is even more pressing with the departure of seniors Malcolm Thomas, Billy White and Mehdi Cheriet, and the possible defection of sophomore Kawhi Leonard to the NBA. Another senior, 6-11 Brian Carlwell, could apply for an extra year via a medical redshirt (he missed most of his sophomore season at Illinois after a serious car accident), but he has given no indication if he will. And who knows how Tim Shelton's knees will hold up for his senior year.

Schools now must wait until the spring signing period in April. Hutson said they expect to get "at least one and maybe two more" players then.

"It's not over yet," he said.

#### 18

##### Aztecs need massive comeback to dig themselves out of hole

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 21, 2010

Miami University is nestled in a quaint college town in southwestern Ohio, with dormitories and classrooms all built in a regal red brick. The library is brick. The frat houses are brick. The facade on the baseball stadium is brick. Even the parking garage is brick.

So at least give the San Diego State basketball team kudos for conformity.

The No. 25 Aztecs opened their game here against Green Bay on Saturday by missing one shot after another, by bricking one free throw after another. They would win 79-70, but it would take one of the largest comebacks in school history and it either represented a major wake-up call or raised serious questions about their viability as a national contender.

"It's not the feeling I wanted after a victory," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "But it's a victory."

"Whatever it was," senior center Brian Carlwell said, "it can't happen again."

The score after nine minutes: 28-6, Green Bay.

The postgame autopsy focused more on how the Aztecs (3-0) dug the hole than how they extricated themselves from it, coming just four days after arguably the biggest win in 90 years of intercollegiate basketball on Montezuma Mesa (79-76 at No. 11 Gonzaga) and a week after a hard-fought road win against a tough Long Beach State team.

"We're not the same team that started the first two games," said Fisher, whose

team faces IUPUI here today in the continuation of the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic. "We all have a little ownership in that ... I'm not trying to throw anyone under the bus. It starts with me. I have to make sure I have them ready."

They weren't.

They opened the game shooting 2-of-11 from the field and 2-of-9 from the line. They had four early turnovers. Forward Billy White, coming off a career-high 30 points against Gonzaga, got two quick fouls. They went nearly five minutes without a point and midway through the half still had just two field goals.

Green Bay (1-2) had something to do with that. Its climb-in-your-jock defense pushed the Aztecs farther from the basket than they wanted, and its motion offense had Aztecs defenders bumping into each other trying to fight over the constant ball screens. That, and the Phoenix couldn't miss.

Said forward Tim Shelton: "You look up at the scoreboard and say, 'Man, we're down 28-6.'"

Carlwell: "They came out fighting and swinging hard, and they were landing everything and we couldn't dodge anything. That definitely could have got out of hand."

It didn't because Fisher and his staff masterfully managed their substitutions, most notably reinserting White despite his foul trouble, and changed the complexion of the game with a variety of pressure defenses. Green Bay had no turnovers through the first 10 minutes, then five in their next seven possessions.

That allowed the Aztecs to launch a 19-4 run that was punctuated by a cross-court, one-handed rocket from White to James Rahon for a fastbreak layup. By halftime, they had closed to 38-33.

"We knew they're a really good team," said Green Bay coach Brian Wardle, whose team was led by 5-foot-10 guard Rahmon Fletcher's 18 points. "I told our guys, 'They're going to make a run. You just have to make it a small, short run,' and we didn't."

SDSU held Green Bay scoreless for the opening 3½ minutes of the second half, took its first lead at 39-38 and never relinquished it. The 22-point comeback is the largest since at least 1996, which is as far back as the school record book goes in that category.

The final margin would have been even more comfortable if – you guessed it – the Aztecs made their free throws and three-pointers. They shot 58.3 percent (21-of-36) from the line, and that was after making seven of their final eight. They shot zero percent (0-of-7) behind the arc, ending a 118-game streak with at least one trey.

Here's how bad it got: Green Bay called a timeout it didn't have, resulting in a technical foul. Fisher sent Leonard, the best free thrower in practice, to shoot the technical free throws.

Miss, miss.

Leonard, who still managed his third double-double of the season (23 points, 10 rebounds), talked afterward about the time change and the crosscountry flight, and how the team decided to skip the morning shoot-around at Millett Hall, a funky arena with black curtains hanging at either end and green tarps covering upper-level seats.

There also was the atmosphere, which was slightly quieter than the library across campus on a Saturday night. With host Miami not playing until the late game, there were 137 spectators – we counted them – in Millett Hall at tipoff.

Fisher wasn't buying any of it.

"It doesn't matter if you come off the bus when the anthem is ending and don't take one warm-up shot," Fisher said, "you have to come out and compete mentally and compete physically ... I can give you a million excuses, but the bottom line is we didn't play like you have to play game in, game out."

19

### Aztecs catch fire in 61-46 win against IUPUI

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 22, 2010

The San Diego State men's basketball team travels with a head coach, an assistant head coach, two assistant coaches, a director of operations, a director of player development, a trainer, a strength and conditioning coach, an academic counselor, a media relations director and a student manager.

It might need to add someone else: a shrink.

The No. 25 Aztecs had multiple personalities again Sunday, overcoming yet another slow start against an inferior opponent to dispatch Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis 61-46 in a neutral-court game at Miami (Ohio).

Figure this out, Dr. Freud: The Aztecs had gone 72½ minutes without making a three-pointer, a drought that stretched across 14 attempts, six days, five halves, three games and two states. Then they went 5-of-5 behind the arc over the next seven minutes.

"It doesn't matter how much we tell the players to relax and keep shooting," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "When you haven't made one in (so long), it makes you tentative. It makes the rim shrink."

How tiny was it?

The Aztecs had last made a three-pointer on Tuesday in Spokane, Wash., by Billy White with 11:01 left against Gonzaga. They went 0-for-7 against Green Bay on Saturday, then 0-for-7 in the first half against IUPUI.

Then Kawhi Leonard, who had yet to make a three-pointer all season, caught the ball on the left side against IUPUI's zone and figured why not.

Swish.

Then D.J. Gay made one. Then Gay made another. Then James Rahon. Then Leonard again.

"After we hit one," Gay said, "everything else felt pretty good."

It transformed a game that shouldn't have been close into a game that wasn't. After trailing by seven points in the first half, the Aztecs (4-0) led by as many as 18 in the second half with their more characteristic array of pressure defense, fast-break dunks and ferocious offensive rebounding. Leonard (20 points, 10 rebounds) finished with his fourth double-double of the season and was 4-of-4 behind the arc in the second half.

It was a similar script to the day before, only not as extreme. They didn't trail 28-6 this time, and you got the sense Fisher wasn't going to have the players bus back to the hotel and, before taking showers, re-live the entire 40 minutes on video – as he did after the Green Bay fiasco.

"Feeling better about our team," Fisher said. "We played with a confident air about us that you have to have ... We were 22 points behind yesterday. We could do nothing right, on either end of the floor. Today we played hard. We just couldn't make a shot."

Undersized IUPUI (1-3) gets some credit for that, playing a funky matchup zone and a variety of full-court presses that flummoxed an Aztecs team which had seen exclusively man-to-man opponents this season. The result was a pedestrian pace and a football score (23-20, Jaguars) at the half.

"We said, 'If they're going to beat us, we want them to beat us from the outside,'" IUPUI coach Ron Hunter said. "They took 17 threes. I was hoping they'd take 20 to 25."

Another issue was playing the early game in Millett Hall with host Miami in the nightcap. On Saturday, there were 137 spectators at tipoff for SDSU's game; on Sunday there were 104.

"Being out here, it makes us appreciate our fans so much," Gay said. "We're not used to playing in an empty gym. This is something different for all of us. There's no energy."

But if you figure that facing IUPUI and their wacky zones in front of a small crowd on a neutral court is behind them now, no such luck. Next month the Aztecs play in something called the Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic at the South Point Arena.

Their Dec. 22 opponent: IUPUI.

## NOTES

SDSU should move up in the Associated Press poll and make its first-ever appearance in the ESPN/USA Today coaches poll when they are released today ... Brian Carlwell did not score in 14 minutes, but the 6-foot-11, 300-pound center literally and figuratively was a huge factor – setting massive ball screens on the perimeter in the second half that helped create open looks at three-pointers for his teammates ....

True freshman Jamaal Franklin played eight minutes, his Aztecs debut, meaning he will not redshirt this season. Fisher said he is still undecided if sophomore Alec Williams, who has yet to play, will redshirt as well ... After 15 productive minutes on Saturday, Tim Shelton did not play to rest his knees ... SDSU has shot 50 percent or better and outrebounded its opponent in all four games ... IUPUI is now 0-9 all-time against ranked opponents.

## 20

**Aztecs run past Miami (Ohio) 77-56**

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 23, 2010

Before each game, San Diego State coach Steve Fisher puts four “keys” on the grease board in the locker room. Things like rebounding goals, defensive points of emphasis, turnover targets.

Maybe Fisher should write this one:

Miss easy shots, turn the ball over, get into foul trouble, fall behind early.

It's a formula that continues to work for the Aztecs, who trailed yet again Monday night against Miami (Ohio) before putting on a frightening offensive and defensive clinic to win 77-56 and show why they moved up to No. 18 in the Associated Press poll.

Hard to fathom, but they were once losing this game 17-6.

Worried?

Fisher merely walked to the edge of the scorer's table, retrieved his water cup and calmly took a sip. It was the third time in as many days that the Aztecs trailed early – by 22 to Green Bay on Saturday, by seven to IUPUI on Sunday – and the fourth time in five games this season.

“I wasn't overly concerned,” he said. “We'd like to play 40 minutes of perfect basketball. We're not going to do that.”

How about 33½ minutes instead?

The Aztecs (5-0) embarrassed the Redhawks (2-3) on their home floor with runs of 25-2 in the first half and 25-0 in the second half. In the latter, they held the Redhawks scoreless for an almost incomprehensible 12 minutes, 35 seconds, compelling the hosts to miss 12 straight shots and commit 12 turnovers.

But what will give opposing coaches the cold sweats is not so much that the Aztecs put together runs in each half totaling 50-2, or that they did it on the road, but that they did it with their bench. Both runs came with starting forwards Billy White and Malcolm Thomas sidelined due to foul trouble.

James Rahon played 26 minutes, Tim Shelton 20, Brian Carlwell 16. Even Mehdi Cheriet got nine minutes.

“Our bench can not only hold serve, but we can whip a couple of aces at you,” Fisher said. “I told them, ‘Don't even ask to come out. We're going to ride this thing as long as we can. When they score, we'll think about making a sub.’”

It got so bad that 68-year-old Miami coach Charlie Coles drew a technical foul for arguing vehemently after the officials stopped the game to tend to an injured Redhawks player. What angered him was that Miami had the ball ... and a man alone behind the Aztecs defense positioned to score an uncontested layup.

“We haven't scored in a de-CADE,” Coles said, emphasizing the second syllable. “I was on a desert. What's that thing you see when you're looking for water? A mirage.”

Before the final buzzer had sounded, Coles had already cried uncle, walking down the sideline to shake hands with Fisher while Thomas was putting an exclamation point on the victory with a thunderous dunk.

Eleven Aztecs played and nine scored, including 19 by D.J. Gay, 16 by Thomas and 15 by Rahon.

Kawhi Leonard continued to collect honors like he does double-doubles (he had his fifth of the season with 12 points and 13 rebounds). He was MVP of the “Oxford subregional” bracket of the O'Reilly Auto Parts CBE Classic, and earlier in the day he was named Mountain West Conference player of the week for the second straight time.

The best news, though, is that the Aztecs finally return to San Diego – the home opener is Friday against NAIA San Diego Christian – after opening with five road or neutral-court games in such outposts as Spokane, Wash., and Oxford, Ohio. You can hole up in the hotel playing video games for only so long before it starts to get old.

Meanwhile, the pollsters continued to be favorably impressed. SDSU made its first-ever appearance in the ESPN/USA Today coaches Top 25 on Monday, landing at No. 22. And no team ranked in the AP poll last week made a greater jump than the seven spots by the Aztecs to No. 18.

Two AP voters had them at No. 12. One had them No. 11. One had them, yes, in the top 10.

A mirage? Maybe not.

## 21

**San Diego State Aztecs shine without benefit of spotlight**

By Sporting News  
November 23, 2010

The spotlight was elsewhere, illuminating the dazzling Sprint Center that decorates Kansas City's downtown as No. 1 Duke and the other brand names contested the semifinals of the CBE Classic. Here at Millett Hall, the math-challenged could have used fingers and toes to count spectators for the event's off-Broadway version.

On an absurdly beautiful November night, the prospect of watching their RedHawks against one of the nation's top 25 college basketball teams, No. 18 San Diego State, could not coax the students of Miami University indoors.

So the Aztecs had to manufacture their own electricity—for the third day in a row. “That's been the story of the tournament,” point guard D.J. Gay said. “We just never seemed to have that instant energy coming off the top.”

Eventually they generated enough to burst forward in a 25-0 second-half run, holding Miami scoreless for more than 12 minutes to break from a tie game toward a 77-56 victory.

**“But what will give opposing coaches the cold sweats is not so much that the Aztecs put together runs in each half totaling 50-2, or that they did it on the road, but that they did it with their bench.”**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - “Aztecs run past Miami (Ohio) 77-56”)

It wasn't like this, though, when the Aztecs visited Gonzaga's jam-packed home court in the nominal Guardians opening game. As the event was structured, Gonzaga was headed for Kansas City and San Diego State would trek to the “other” Miami regardless of what occurred in that game. But the Aztecs left no doubt regarding which was the better team.

“That was a completely different environment than this,” Gay said. “We're not really used to playing in an empty gym. Not to make any excuses or anything like that.”

There was nothing to excuse, of course. This was the Aztecs' fifth consecutive victory, all away from home. They are ranked in both polls, something that's never happened before.

They have positioned themselves as part of the argument when people talk about the best teams in the West.

“We think we're good. We think we deserve to be there,” coach Steve Fisher said about the ranking, while acknowledging he wants to see where the Aztecs

stand after pending games against Saint Mary's, Wichita State and California.

"We played on a big stage at Gonzaga. I think a lot of people saw us, and I think some people were surprised. Would we have liked to be in Kansas City playing K-State? Yeah. But we were here. It was good for us."

San Diego State has a lot of the components of a serious basketball team. They're unselfish. Their star, 6-7 sophomore Kawhi Leonard, recorded his fifth double double in five games with 12 points and 13 rebounds. He grabbed eight offensive rebounds and still took only 11 shots from the floor. Showing precious little concern for his own glory, he tied Gay for the team lead in assists with four.

"I'm playing my heart out for my team," Leonard said. "Coach Fisher has got it in our heads that passing the ball, great teamwork will win games. One player being selfish causes everybody else to be selfish on the team."

Gay acknowledged last year's team, which reached the NCAA Tournament and lost in the first round, "had our immature moments." It's mostly the same guys on this team, but he explains they were new to each other a year ago and have grown closer. "This team has no ego. We're all out to win."

The Aztecs have size, with three effective players 6-8 or taller plus Leonard, whose length and strength allows him to dominate as a rebounder. When starters Billy White and Malcolm Thomas played indifferently in the early part of the second half against Miami, Fisher went with 6-11 Brian Carlwell and 6-7 Tim Shelton. It was a long while before there was any reason to put the starters back.

During a timeout huddle, Fisher told his reserve bigs, "We're going to run this thing as long as we can run it. When they score, we'll think about making some subs."

By the time the RedHawks made a basket, with 5:46 left, the competitive portion of the evening was over. And when the game ended for real, there still was time to get back to the hotel and watch the Zags playing in that K-State game. "This is a team that's going to stick together in the long haul," Gay said. "We're coming out stronger, we're coming out better." From the start of the year, yes. From the start of the game? Depends on the night, and whether anyone's there to watch.

## 22

### Aztecs dispatch SD Christian

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
November 27, 2010

Midway through the first half, Kawhi Leonard found himself alone behind the entire San Diego Christian College defense, with no one else across midcourt. He flew in for a whirling, dipping, windmill dunk.

It clanged off the back rim.

We are just six games into the season, but it is becoming increasing apparent that San Diego State's celebrated basketball team may be fueled exclusively by external motivation: a hostile road crowd, a national television broadcast, an early 22-point deficit.

Playing a 3-4 NAIA team with a 5-foot-7 point guard that is missing its two biggest players plus two starters on the Friday after Thanksgiving? You're not getting their A game.

The No. 18 Aztecs beat San Diego Christian 88-69 in their regular-season home opener, and they did lead by 24 in the second half, but the 5,674 in Viejas Arena saw only glimpses of the team of which so much is expected this season.

"You have to have an edge about you," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "I thought that kind of came and went tonight."

There would be an alley-oop dunk on the break, or a flying tip-in, or a deep three-pointer. Then the Hawks would calmly go to the other end, run offense for 25 seconds, get a guy open on a flex cut and make the layup. The score after seven minutes: 11-9.

The score after 12½ minutes: 23-22.

The score four minutes after the Aztecs led by 24: 82-67.

Meanwhile, in South Padre Island, Texas, St. Mary's College was playing a highly-

regarded Texas Tech team, and winning 88-68. The Gaels are 6-0 and averaging 93.2 points to their opponents' 59. A year ago, they blasted the Aztecs by 22.

SDSU's next opponent: St. Mary's, here on Wednesday night.

"I'd probably give us a C-minus," Aztecs captain D.J. Gay said when asked to grade his team's performance Friday. "I only say that because we won't beat St. Mary's the way we played today. The energy will be there on Wednesday. There will be no underestimating or overlooking our opponent, or anything of that nature."

That's followed by a Dec. 4 home game against Wichita State, which nearly knocked off UConn before the Huskies beat No. 2 Michigan State and No. 8 Kentucky in successive nights.

That's followed by a Dec. 8 game at Cal, which just upset No. 21 Temple.

But give the Aztecs (6-0) this much: They can counterpunch. They won at Long Beach State and then-No. 11 Gonzaga in hostile environments. They came back from 28-6 down against Green Bay, and a double-digit deficit against Miami.

Even Friday night, six times they drained a three-pointer on the ensuing possession after San Diego Christian had made one and threatened to build momentum.

The game afforded Fisher a chance to use his bench liberally. Nobody played more than 23 minutes, and all 11 Aztecs who got in scored. That included sophomore forward Alec Williams, who made his season debut (two points, four rebounds in eight minutes) and thus ended any speculation that he might redshirt.

The game counted on SDSU's record but not for SDCC, which considered it an exhibition. The Hawks were led by Helix High alum Aaron Felix with 21 points and Tyler Mutton with 19.

"I was surprised it was this close," said Felix, a senior guard. "They're a ranked team. They're supposed to beat us by 50. We just stuck together and played as a team ... They were nicking and knacking at each other. They were bickering with each other."

## Notes

Fewer than 3,000 tickets remain for Wednesday's game against St. Mary's ... The Aztecs continued their streak of shooting 50 percent or better and outrebounding their opponent in all six games this season ... One streak did end, however: Leonard did not get a double-double, finishing with 14 points and six rebounds in 23 minutes ... This was SDSU's 16th straight nonconference home win, equaling the school record ... SDSU from the line: 4-of-9, or 44.4 percent. SDSU from three-point range: 8-of-15, or 53.3 percent.

## 23

### Opener is a holiday cruise for SDSU

By Jay Paris | North County Times  
November 27, 2010

San Diego State scored an impressive win over a team from the east on Friday night, something that only helps its resume.

Uh, maybe not.

The losing squad did hail from the east ... county. Yep, El Cajon's San Diego Christian College, an NAIA school, was at Viejas Arena for a mismatch against the No. 18 San Diego State men's basketball team.

And the Aztecs cruised to an 88-69 victory in their long-awaited home opener.

"We felt tonight would be a good chance to get others involved because we will need them down the road in key games," guard D.J. Gay said.

SDSU (6-0) has been piling up victories and miles. Its first five games were on the road, with only the season opener at Long Beach State being staged in California. Then it was the headline-grabbing triumph at then-No. 11 Gonzaga, following by victories over three Midwest schools at a three-day tournament in Oxford, Ohio.

So it was an anxious, if sparse, crowd of 5,674 at Montezuma Mesa, that was eager to see their No. 18-ranked Aztecs on Friday night.

Prior to the tipoff came moments both teams will remember.

When the Aztecs were going through drills with a series of rim-rattling dunks, the overmatched Hawks (3-4) were looking on with trepidation.

SDSU's Kodak moment came when the 2010 Mountain West Conference tournament championship banner was unveiled above the western basket. It fits nicely with the team's other four, and the one marking the program's six trips to the NCAA tournament.

Those NCAA excursions have yet to produce a victory, but there's plenty of time to discuss that.

Friday was all about getting loose and letting the backups snag some applause.

How carefree were the Aztecs? After one dunk, Brian Carlwell blew a kiss to the crowd.

On a Kawhi Leonard throw-down after sprinting to the basket alone in the open court, he went for a windmill show-stopper only to see the ball clank against the rim and bounce nearly to half court.

But no one wearing red and black went ballistic or chided the star for a hot dog move that wasn't kosher.

So goes it when going against San Diego Christian, a team that has lost to the likes of the Master's College.

Some speculated that a white jacket was in order for Hawks coach Conrad Sun for agreeing to this mismatch. But say this, his guys showed up and gave what they could.

In fact, the Hawks trailed by only three nearly 12 minutes into the game. The deficit would grow to 10 by halftime, but it wasn't because of a lack of San Diego Christian effort.

But the Aztecs, even if playing as if this was a glorified practice, had too much firepower. Chase Tapley and Leonard shared team-high honors with 14 points each.

SDSU coach Steve Fisher was liberal in using his bench, which meant his five returning starters didn't log their usual minutes.

There was true freshman LaBradford Franklin dishing a pretty pass for a bucket to Carlwell. Even Alec Williams, who had yet to see the floor, got eight minutes and two points.

But the Hawks didn't blink, even when getting blistered.

Billy White took exception to some physical play underneath the basket and got chippy with some Hawks. But San Diego Christian just shrugged.

The Aztecs hit the gas in the second half, and the holiday weekend gathering had plenty of reasons to cheer. The biggest roar came when Gay placed an alley-hoop pass off to the right of the rim for Malcolm Thomas. A soaring Thomas grabbed it with his right hand and threw it down with panache for a 58-40 lead.

But at times the Aztecs were indifferent.

"You have to have an edge about you, and that kind of came and went," Fisher said.

SDSU's competition increases dramatically next week with Saint Mary's and Wichita State visiting. Both teams received votes in this week's AP Top 25.

"We won't beat Saint Mary's if we play the way we did today," said Gay, who gave the Aztecs a C-minus for the game. "The energy will be there on Wednesday, and there will be no underestimating or overlooking our opponent or anything of that nature."

Fisher admits there's room to grow.

"The most important thing is we have to guard better and defend with higher energy and greater intelligence to really be good," Fisher said. "It doesn't matter who you play, who is watching, we have to do a better job. If we don't, we won't have the kind of season we want to have."

24

### Everything clicks as Aztecs dispatch Gaels

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union Tribune  
December 2, 2010

Malcolm Thomas takes a short jumper over Saint Mary's Mitchell Young.

Coach Steve Fisher was talking the other day about the marked improvement of San Diego State forward Malcolm Thomas from last season to this.

"Same person, same number, different player," Fisher said.

Ditto for the Aztecs.

Same people, same jersey numbers, different team.

**"ESPN, first game, a lot of people watching, you get beat by 20-30 points, it sticks with you," said guard Chase Tapley, who had a season-high 14 points on 6-of-9 shooting. 'They embarrassed us. Tonight we came out super-focused.'"**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Everything clicks as Aztecs dispatch Gaels")

The No. 17 Aztecs handled a very good Saint Mary's team with surprising ease Wednesday night, leading by as many as 20 points en route to a 69-55 victory before the ninth sellout in Viejas Arena history and the earliest ever in a season.

Perhaps more impressive, the Aztecs (7-0) did it despite an uncharacteristically silent game from Kawhi Leonard, the sophomore forward who had scouts from several NBA teams in attendance. Leonard, averaging 18 points and 10.5 rebounds, got into foul trouble early in both halves and finished with six and eight in just 23 minutes.

On this night, it didn't matter. Everything else was working.

"They played well," said Gaels coach Randy Bennett, whose team was averaging 90.3 points and had 24 at the half. "They exposed us."

You-know-it's-your-night example No. 1: Brian Carlwell, SDSU's backup 300-pound center, entered the game midway through the first half ... and seven seconds later drained a deep three.

You-know-it's-your-night example No. 2: True freshman LaBradford Franklin was fouled hard near the free-throw line and chucked the ball over his head, arcing a good 10 feet above the basket ... and it went in.

The referees didn't allow the hoop, ostensibly because they deemed the foul was committed before the shot. Or maybe it was out of pity for the Gaels.

Tipoff was delayed 16 minutes after the Viejas Arena lights had trouble coming back on after they went out for SDSU's Hollywood-style player introductions.

Then the Aztecs literally shot them out.

They made six of their first seven shots, including a pair of threes, to take a 14-2 lead — no doubt fueled by memories of last year's 80-58 shellacking at Saint Mary's in which they trailed by 21 at the half.

"ESPN, first game, a lot of people watching, you get beat by 20-30 points, it sticks with you," said guard Chase Tapley, who had a season-high 14 points on 6-of-9 shooting. "They embarrassed us. Tonight we came out super-focused."

This Gaels team doesn't have 6-foot-11 posts Omar Samhan and Ben Allen, but it still has Matthew Dellavedova and Mickey McConnell, as good a starting guard tandem as there is on the West Coast, along with touted transfer Rob Jones (from USD). And Dellavedova (15 points) and Jones (17 points) kept the Gaels in it by making 8-of-15 behind the arc.

Yet every time Saint Mary's threatened to pare the deficit under double digits, the Aztecs would block a shot into the sideline water cooler or knock down another three or convert a steal into a fast-break layup or get another putback off an offensive rebound.

"San Diego State was tough for us, tough to score on," Bennett said. "It's hard to get a good look on them. And you get a layup or a good post move, and they block it. We had to hit some tough shots to get 55 (points)."

Lost in the gaudy statistics — a 10-1 advantage in blocks, a 16-6 advantage in second-chance points, eight players with at least five points, nine players with at

least one rebound — was this number:

Two.

That's how many points McConnell scored in 37 minutes against Aztecs guard D.J. Gay. A year ago, McConnell torched Gay and the Aztecs on ball screens for 24.

The motivation?

"D.J. watched the game film from last year," Fisher said.

#### Notes

The Aztecs host a Wichita State team that is getting votes in The Associated Press Top 25 on Saturday at 7 p.m. ... With a layup in the first half, Billy White became the 17th Aztec in the Division I era to reach 1,000 career points ... There were about 1,200 tickets left 24 hours before tipoff, but the game was sold out about a half-hour early.

#### 25

### Tapley, Thomas lead No. 17 Aztecs over Saint Mary's

By Dan Hayes | North County Times  
December 2, 2010

When these two schools met in Moraga last November, San Diego State saw just how far it was from becoming an elite men's basketball team when it received a 22-point thrashing from Saint Mary's.

On Wednesday night, the roles were reversed.

The No. 17-ranked Aztecs stayed perfect with a strong defensive effort, cruising to a 69-55 victory over Saint Mary's in front of 12,414 at Viejas Arena.

Leading by as many as 20 points, SDSU improved to 7-0 -- its best start since 2006-07 -- with a win over a Gaels (6-2) club that won two games in the NCAA tournament last March.

"We talk about it all the time in practice," senior Malcolm Thomas said of the Nov. 16, 2009 loss. "Last year, we didn't communicate well. We kind of underestimated defensive transition. This year we made that our main goal to defensively get out there on the 3-point shooters, because they're a great 3-point shooting team."

Coach Steve Fisher said reviewing game film from the Aztecs' previous meeting with Saint Mary's -- a game in which the Gaels connected on 13-of-29 3-point shots -- angered him. But the 12th-year coach had little to be upset about in this one.

Whether it was Thomas' long arms or SDSU's high-pressure defense, Saint Mary's offense wilted in the first half as it went scoreless for stretches of 4 minutes, 26 seconds and 4:36. The Gaels -- who shot 39.8 percent from the field -- also had a 4:08 scoreless stretch in the second half. The defensive pressure allowed the Aztecs to go on several runs, including a 14-2 jaunt early that Saint Mary's never recovered from.

"We defended the way we wanted to defend," Fisher said. "It set the tone for the game. We're capable of scoring in bunches if we defend and rebound like we are capable and we did that in stretches tonight."

Thomas, who had 12 points, altered the course of several Saint Mary's offensive possessions. The lanky post man blocked six of SDSU's 10 shots and made any basket attempted inside difficult to make.

"It's hard to get a good look on them," Saint Mary's coach Randy Bennett said. "They can cover up some mistakes. You get a layup or a good post move and they block it. They are good athletes and good defensively and make you shoot a 3 over a hand or a tough 2. They did a good job."

"We had to hit some tough shots to hit 55 points."

D.J. Gay hit several tough shots late to ward off any thoughts of a Saint Mary's rally. The senior guard had a 3-point play with 6:05 left in the second half to stretch the lead back to 13 points and then hit a pull-up jumper with 2:34 left to give SDSU a 64-53 lead.

Chase Tapley also sparked the Aztecs' late in the first half when their lead

slipped to four. He scored 10 of his 14 points in a span of 3:34 and helped SDSU carry a 37-24 lead into halftime.

"Saint Mary's is a good team," Tapley said. "(The) shots were just falling for me tonight."

#### 26

### You, San Diego State, Are Best Basketball Team in West

By Tom Krasovic | San Francisco Chronicle  
December 3, 2010

Congratulations to the new Best of the West in men's college basketball.

If anybody east of the Mountain Time Zone can identify you, the prize is a free trip to San Diego for your February showdown with Brigham Young University. We'll even arrange a side trip to Sea World.

Take a bow, San Diego State.

The season is still young, but you're looking like more than a flavor of the week or month.

You went to the NCAA tournament last March as a No. 11 seed, welcomed back five seniors and a sophomore star this summer and unveiled a shooter who practiced with you last year.

Then you came out ready to play.

You defeated No. 11 Gonzaga in its home, The Kennel, where the Zags treat most foes like chew toys.

You won a tournament in Flyover Land, culminated by a rout of Miami of Ohio on its court.

Wednesday night, playing in your arena before a sellout crowd, you were ranked higher than you've ever been -- 17th by the Associated Press -- and you acted like you belonged.

It wasn't so much that you defeated another good club from the West, Saint Mary's. More, it was the growth and depth that you showed en route to the 69-55 victory.

"They're a year more mature," former University of San Diego starter Rob Jones said of you after scoring a team-best 17 points for Saint Mary's. "They grew up a little bit."

With your best player -- NBA prospect Kawhi Leonard -- on the bench because of spotty play and two fouls, you outscored the Gaels by eight points over the final 9:31 of the first half. You won the second half, too, even as Leonard, the sophomore star, again cheered from the bench.

Saint Mary's received six votes in the latest ESPN/USA Today Coaches poll, but your defense made Gaels coach Randy Bennett feel a breeze in front of the 12,414 spectators.

"They exposed us," said Bennett, who a year ago directed the Gaels to the Sweet 16. "They exposed a lot of things. Most of all, we've got to get mentally tougher."

Four days earlier, the Gaels (6-2) lost by a point to No. 23 Brigham Young on a neutral court in Texas, where Cougars star Jimmer Fredette sank a go-ahead three-pointer with 10 seconds left.

Against you, Aztecs, the Gaels fell behind 14-2 and never caught up.

"San Diego State was tougher for us," Bennett said. "Tougher to score on. BYU is good, though. They're different. BYU is more perimeter oriented. They play off Fredette more. And these guys have more of an inside attack."

When the Gaels (6-2) worked the ball inside, your 6-foot-9 pogo stick, Marcus Thomas, swatted aside six shots and spooked several other attempts.

When Gaels leading scorer Mickey McConnell got the ball or tried to get it, your senior point guard D.J. Gay made amends.

Gay showed that he's a far better defender than he was a year ago when Mc-

Connell rang up 24 points on him in the Gaels' lopsided win at Saint Mary's.

McConnell ended up with two points in 37 minutes. Gay had only one turnover in 40 minutes.

Aztecs, your coach, Steve Fisher, talked afterward more about Gay than any other performer. He's proud of the guard who until a year ago had never run the point. Now Gay looks like he's a point guard.

Fisher told of the latest what-a-difference-a-year-makes moment for Gay that came earlier Wednesday at your practice.

"D.J. watched the game film from last year," Fisher said. "I came in and told them, 'I'm so mad about the way we played a year ago.' I said, 'I'm most mad at who DJ?' And he goes, 'Me.'"

"I said, 'No, ME. Because it starts with me.'"

With Santa Clara transfer James Rahon now eligible, Aztecs, you all have more room to operate because Rahon's long-distance threat merits attention, as Gonzaga discovered when Rahon hit two long shots and put up 12 points in 29 minutes. So, of course, Saint Mary's crowded the 6-foot-5 sophomore -- and Rahon countered with drives that yielded the majority of his nine points in 20 minutes on Wednesday.

The NBA scouts can't take their eyes off Leonard, your 6-foot-7 small forward who has 22 career double-doubles, yet in the win over Gonzaga it was 6-8 senior forward Billy White who led your offense with 30 points. And if there's an emerging leader behind the scenes, it's the senior Thomas.

"Malcolm, I can't say enough about him," said sophomore guard Chase Tapley, an eager defender who zapped Saint Mary's with 10 quick points late in the first half. "He's improved tremendously. He's more of a leader. He works hard every day at practice and it feeds off on us."

While the frontcourt of Thomas-White-Leonard remains your strength -- and loses little when 7-foot senior Brian Carlwell comes off the bench -- your backcourt is deeper than a year ago not only because of Rahon but also freshman LaBradford Franklin. "L.B. can play," Fisher said after the quick point guard's impressive 10-minute outing against the Gaels.

But listen up, Aztecs.

The easy part is behind you.

Winning your first seven games is good for the RPI and ticket sales, but Fisher's only other Aztecs team to start out 7-0 ended up 22-11 and in the NIT, where it lost in the second round four years ago.

People in San Diego are expecting you to become the first Aztecs team to win an NCAA tournament game.

Historically, SDSU's football and basketball teams have lapsed after everyone tells them how good they are.

Heck, the hometown NFL Chargers have been at their worst when favored to win playoff games at home.

You, Aztecs, no longer are cuddly upstarts.

"We have the targets on our backs now," Tapley said. "It is tough."

How will you respond?

"We're humbling ourselves," Tapley said. "We're going to handle it good because we trust ourselves."

The way Tapley sees it, your defense will carry you, Aztecs, across the inevitable stretches when your shooting goes awry. He cited a "bond" that developed under Fisher's defensive coordinator, Justin Hutson, late last season and would lead to your championship run in the Mountain West Conference tournament

and the scare that you put into sixth-seed Tennessee in the NCAAs.

"We pride ourselves on defense," Tapley said. "And we have a great coaching staff. If we listen to them, you're going to see the results like you did (Wednesday) against Saint Mary's."

Bennett said it's "hard to get a good look" against your defense. How to beat you? "Be even more patient," he said.

Fisher insisted that your egos will not run away with you, even though it is nice, he said, "to see a number in front of our name" when San Diego State appears on the ESPN ticker.

He said that the five seniors will not allow you to get "too full" of yourselves.

He said your team captain, Gay, will continue to command your attention.

**"When I went through the (handshake) line, I mentioned to a couple of them that hopefully they get to the tournament and win multiple games,' Wichita State coach Gregg Marshall said. 'That's a Sweet 16, Elite Eight-type of team if they get the right draw, get a couple breaks and stay healthy.'"**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs go to 8-0 with big win against Wichita State")

"He is very, very steady," Fisher said. "You never see him get overly excited. You never see him get too down in the dumps, regardless of what happened. Our team has taken on his personality a little bit."

The best part of this journey, Aztecs, is that Fisher has only one job now -- to coach you.

When you were in elementary school, Fisher was in his first year of trying to resurrect the SDSU program that in no way resembled the blue-blooded Michigan enterprise that he'd overseen.

Those Aztecs of 1999-2000 usually played home games in front of about 2,600 fans and some 10,000 empty seats

"When I first started out here, I was the 'Ticket Man,'" Fisher said late Wednesday, sounding, and looking like, a grandfather to the program. "I probably could've been put in jail. I had tickets in every pocket. I'm going all over campus trying to give 'em away."

Wednesday morning, Fisher looked out of his office window and saw a line outside the arena's ticket window. Used to be, that only happened when Prince or another musical performer was on the marquee--not Saint Mary's.

The line had grown by the time you Aztecs headed past for the early afternoon walk-through practice.

"Now we're a hot ticket," Fisher said. "It makes all of us feel good. And we're appreciative of the fact our fans have supported us tremendously. And we need to keep 'em coming. It makes you feel good when you've got a lot of folks here."

## 27

### Aztecs go to 8-0 with big win against Wichita State

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 5, 2010

Shortly before tipoff, J.T. Durlley approaches each of his Wichita State teammates. They raise their arms and the 6-foot-8, 236-pound bearded center pretends to punch them in the stomach, only for them to smile and walk away unscathed.

Which is exactly what San Diego State's basketball team did once the game started.

In what amounted to a major gut check, the No. 17 Aztecs beat -- or was it survived? -- an inordinately talented Shockers team and its funky matchup zone 83-69 on yet another raucous December night in Viejas Arena. The Aztecs move to 8-0, equaling the best start in 90 years of basketball on Montezuma Mesa.

This win won't carry the cachet of beating Gonzaga, then No. 11 in the country, at Gonzaga last month. But in some respects Steve Fisher's Aztecs might have been pushed harder Saturday night by a team that nearly beat UConn and that likely will still be playing in mid-March.

And that's the scary part. The more these Aztecs are pushed, and they've already defeated arguably four NCAA Tournament-caliber teams, the better they



get.

"When I went through the (handshake) line, I mentioned to a couple of them that hopefully they get to the tournament and win multiple games," Wichita State coach Gregg Marshall said. "That's a Sweet 16, Elite Eight-type of team if they get the right draw, get a couple breaks and stay healthy.

"They got around us, they went over us. They were quicker, faster, longer ... I like their team a lot."

A close game turned midway through the second half, when SDSU put together 1:11 of basketball that this school has rarely, if ever, seen. It was 47-46, Shockers. And then, suddenly, frighteningly, it was 60-47, Aztecs.

All of SDSU's points came from short jumpers, layups, dunks or free throws, most off steals from a ferocious full-court press fueled by a deafening crowd. Fourteen points, 71 seconds.

Or think of it this way: At that pace over 40 minutes, the final score would be 473-0.

The key moment was triggered by Chase Tapley sprawling across the floor for a loose ball that led to Billy White being intentionally fouled by Wichita's Gabe Blair. Initially, officials mistakenly allowed Kawhi Leonard to shoot the free throws, and he made one of two.

Realizing their mistake, they took the point off the scoreboard and had White shoot them. He made both – 56-47.

The Aztecs also got the ball out of bounds, and Malcolm Thomas scored inside – 58-47

Wichita inbound, White steal, White dunk – 60-47.

Marshall called timeout, but his players momentarily kept playing. It was so loud in Viejas Arena, sold out on consecutive nights for the first time in building history, that his players couldn't hear the referee's whistle.

Said White, who had 24 points and four of his team's 10 steals: "We started playing San Diego State defense."

Said Wichita guard Graham Hatch: "It was clicking for them."

Even down 17 with the arena shaking, the Shockers (5-2) refused to go away, quickly closing the deficit to single digits with a barrage of three-pointers (9-of-18 on the night). But the Aztecs were too much, shooting 61.5 percent in the second half and holding a 15-5 advantage on second-chance points.

"This team came out with no fear," SDSU captain D.J. Gay said. "Us being ranked, us being 7-0 meant nothing to them. It took us a while to adjust to their play, and we came out in the second half and made them play our game."

#### NOTES

SDSU next plays at Cal on Wednesday night, a game that will be shown locally on Channel 4 ... The Aztecs extended their school-record streak of nonconference home wins to 18 ... Overshadowed by the second-half fireworks was a key contribution by senior forward Mehdi Cheriet in the first half, collecting six points and two rebounds in a mere five minutes ... Wichita's David Kyles had 18 points (4-of-5 on threes) in just 19 minutes, and would have played more had he not been in foul trouble ... Kawhi Leonard had 16 points and 12 rebounds despite battling a stomach virus. (He reportedly vomited as he came out for the second half.)

#### 28

##### Aztecs continue to make home a pressure cooker

By Greg Ball | North County Times  
December 5, 2010

San Diego State's Viejas Arena is becoming an increasingly unpleasant venue for visiting teams.

Sellout crowds are the norm, a raucous student section takes the lead in establishing a big-time college basketball atmosphere, and when the Aztecs get rolling, the volume seems to shake the building.

Saturday night, the Aztecs gave a capacity crowd of 12,414 plenty to applaud

about and supplied Wichita State ample reason to head home with a shell-shocked feeling that has become familiar for Aztecs' opponents.

San Diego State secured its eighth straight victory Saturday, an 83-69 victory over the Shockers spurred by a frenetic mid-second-half surge. After their third home victory on 10 days, the 17th-ranked Aztecs are now 8-0 and have equaled their best start in four seasons.

"I told the guys before the game to take a look around at the crowd, and I told them, 'You're the reason it's like this,' " Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said. "I told them to look at all the people who are here to see you and enjoy what you've accomplished."

The crowd got exactly what it came to see.

Forward Billy White scored 24 points, and front-court mate Kawhi Leonard added 16 points and 12 rebounds. The Aztecs out-rebounded Wichita State, 36-27, and totaled 48 points in the paint to the Shockers' 28.

While the Aztecs' offensive numbers jumped off the stat sheet, it was their defensive play that sparked the game's decisive run.

Trailing 47-46 just over five minutes into the second half, San Diego State went on a 14-0 run in a little less than two minutes. White scored nine points during the stretch as the Aztecs turned a close game into a rout. Their lead ballooned to as many as 17 points by the 10:40 mark, and Wichita State never cut its deficit to fewer than nine points.

White, who scored a career-high 30 points in a program-defining win over Gonzaga last month, was quick to point out that the Aztecs' decisive stretch was keyed by their stifling play when Wichita State had the ball.

"In the second half, we shut them down a little bit and started to play San Diego State defense," White said. "And that's what got us the win."

Fisher agreed.

"It has to be as good of a five-minute stretch as we've had this year," he said. "I told them in the locker room that everybody contributed in that run in the second half. It appeared as if Billy had a twin out there at the same time. It was like he was in two places at once."

San Diego State led 37-36 at halftime, but the Aztecs could have given themselves more room for comfort. Wichita State didn't take its first lead until the 12:21 mark of the half, and the Aztecs later put together a 9-0 run that put them ahead 31-24 before the Shockers clawed back.

San Diego State shot 42.4 percent and out-rebounded the Shockers 19-13 before the break, but failed to adequately contain sharp-shooting guard David Kyles. Wichita State's leading scorer, he totaled 11 first half-points and went 3-for-3 from behind the 3-point arc.

He made just one more in the second half, and after the Shockers went 6-for-11 from behind the arc in the first half, they made just three of their seven second-half 3-pointers.

Kyles finished with 18 points to lead Wichita State, but he was largely ineffective in the second half.

"We beat a good team that can hurt you in a lot of ways," Fisher said. "They made some shots. At halftime, I thought we should have been up by 10. We didn't supply the pressure in the first half, but we got better in the second half and made it hard for them to get looks."

#### 29

##### Steve Fisher back in spotlight with San Diego State on the rise

By Robyn Norwood | USA Today  
December 8, 2010

The flamboyant freshmen who were known as the Fab Five are the answers to a trivia question now.

"Chris Webber, Jalen Rose," said D.J. Gay, the point guard for Coach Steve Fisher's San Diego State Aztecs. "Glen Rice?"

Try Juwan Howard, Jimmy King and Ray Jackson.

The famous freshmen are 37 years old. Only Howard still is playing, for the Miami Heat. Webber and Rose are television analysts. And Ed Martin, the former automobile worker whose payments to Webber and others led to NCAA probation for Michigan and the removal of the banners for the Fab Five's appearances in the 1992 and '93 NCAA title games, has been dead since 2003.

Fisher — who first rose to prominence at Michigan with a dizzying run to the 1989 NCAA championship after Bill Frieder was sacked as coach — is back in the spotlight at 65 in his 12th season at San Diego State.

The Aztecs' No. 25 ranking in the Associated Press preseason poll was the first in school history, and their Nov. 16 upset of Gonzaga in a building where the Bulldogs had lost only four times in 76 games ranks among the biggest wins since the school began playing basketball in 1921. Now the Aztecs (8-0) are ranked 15th in the USA TODAY/ESPN Coaches Poll heading into tonight's game at California.

"I think we've sold more season tickets than we ever have," said Athletic Director Jim Sterk, previously at Washington State, with the number at more than 4,600 and counting. "Our students are geared up and ready to go."

The Aztecs' slow, steady rise has been a dramatic contrast to Fisher's earlier turn as a college coach, when his first game was in the NCAA tournament and his sixth was for the national championship. Two years later, he recruited the most ballyhooed freshman class in history, though sometimes the significance is lost on today's recruits, born in the early 1990s.

"Some of them, we get interest because of the Fab Five. The Dad or uncle want to talk about the Fab Five or the '89 team," Fisher said.

Before Fisher arrived at San Diego State, the school had 13 losing seasons in the previous 14 years, but had a beautiful new 12,414-seat arena. The Aztecs were 5-23 in Fisher's first season, but since have had six 20-win seasons and played in three NCAA tournament games, though the school has yet to win one. This might be the year, with five starters back from a team that lost to Tennessee by three in the first round last season.

Instead of a roster stocked with McDonald's All-Americans from the Midwest, Fisher has a team built with far less-prominent California high school players and transfers, with one particular standout: Kawhi Leonard, a 6-7 sophomore forward from King High in Riverside — a player some major programs passed on in part because they thought he was a "tweener," or someone without a natural position.

"Leonard is a terrific player, and probably when you think about players around the country, very much underappreciated nationally," said Lon Kruger, the coach at Nevada Las Vegas, a Mountain West Conference rival. "He's going to explode onto the scene."

"What Steve has done there is a fantastic job, especially when you think about the tradition and history of San Diego State basketball before he got there."

#### Making a splash

Fisher started as a high school coach. But he was a veteran college assistant when he was thrust onto the scene in 1989 after Frieder announced before the NCAA tournament he would leave for Arizona State after the season. Bo Schembechler, then the Michigan athletic director, responded by removing Frieder, famously saying "a Michigan man is going to coach Michigan," and installed Fisher as interim coach.

"Nobody thought we would win, given what had happened," said Fisher. "We did not send the band. We did not send our cheerleaders. We rented Georgia State's pep band and that got out in the Atlanta paper. So I go out for my first game, a nervous wreck, and somebody had a big sign, I think he was from Xavier, 'Rent a band, Rent a coach.' "

His wife, Angie, rode on a bus with the athletic department brass to the first-round game in Atlanta.

"They were talking about 'Well, who should we hire? Should we hire Pete Gillen? Should we hire Jim Crews? We've got to call Bobby Knight to find out who to hire,'" Fisher said.

But Michigan went on a run and won it all, riding the talent of Rice and Rumeal Robinson's clutch free throws in the final seconds of overtime to a victory against Seton Hall in the NCAA championship game.

Weeks later, Fisher and his wife were President George H.W. Bush's guests for a White House state dinner.

"I'm sitting between Bob Hope and Audrey Hepburn, and Bob Hope comes up to me and says, 'Steve Fisher, the Walter Mitty of college basketball,'" Fisher said. "It was unbelievable. We spent an hour with the Bushes before the dinner. We went on a walk with them after the dinner with Millie the dog and all that, and three weeks before that half of Ann Arbor didn't know who we were."

By the way, he got the job.

Fisher thought he'd never leave Michigan, but he was abruptly fired in 1997 amid investigations into Martin's involvement with players, chiefly Webber. In a related case, Webber later pleaded guilty to criminal contempt, avoiding a prison sentence and the prospect of a federal trial on charges he lied to a grand jury investigating Martin's illegal lottery operation.

Fisher was found to have left complimentary tickets for Martin, raising questions about whether he should have been aware Martin gave athletes money, in some cases beginning when they were in high school. But when the NCAA imposed sanctions in 2003, it took no action against Fisher, by then at San Diego State, saying there was "no direct evidence" he was involved.

"When the thing came down with Chris, I'd have gone to my grave saying nothing happened, period. The subpoena found that there was money," said Fisher, who still talks to the members of the team from time to time.

"I feel badly things happened the way they did, in terms of taking the banners down and that sort of thing. But for anybody to say that group did something illegal to form them, or to come together, no."

#### Building program 'a little at a time'

Fisher took a year off after being fired, then worked as an assistant for the Sacramento Kings for a season.

"It's like anybody. If you get fired, you go through all the emotions. Anger, self-pity, worrying about what's going to be next," Fisher said. "Then you get up and move on."

When the San Diego State job came open, Frieder — out of coaching and splitting his time between Phoenix and Del Mar — recommended Fisher.

Fisher got a seven-year contract, rare security in college coaching, and followed Frieder to the seaside town of Del Mar, north of San Diego. The two men talk almost every day.

"When Steve got to San Diego State, there wasn't good talent," Frieder said. "There were too many Division II players on the team, and you're a Division I program. There was a lot of apathy. The crowds had dwindled to nothing, maybe 1,500."

"I think this team is like Butler," Frieder said, referring to the surprise team that reached the NCAA championship game against Duke last season. "I think they could go deep in the tournament. The Sweet 16 is an excellent possibility, or even beyond."

- Robyn Norwood (*USA Today* - "Steve Fisher back in spotlight with San Diego State on the rise")

Last season, the Aztecs averaged 7,227, with two sellouts.

"He built it a little at a time. He didn't try to cut corners and he didn't try to do it with bad kids early," Frieder said. "I even talked to him about that. I took too many chances at Arizona State. He didn't."

By his third season, Fisher had guided the Aztecs to the 2002 NCAA tournament. They got back in 2006, and again in 2010.

"Every four years," Fisher said. "I hope it's not '14 before we go again."

It hasn't all been sunny weather in California. In 2008, he underwent surgery for prostate cancer.

"We were all nervous. I have people I know who lost their lives to prostate cancer," said Fisher, who said he is doing "great" and participates in public-service announcements for the San Diego facility where he was treated.

Fisher does not seem focused on retirement, but he is beyond worrying about finding the next job. His eyes are on this team.

Frieder raves about the front line of Leonard, Malcolm Thomas and Billy White, who scored a career-high 30 points against Gonzaga.

He likes the balance and depth of the Aztecs, along with the addition of James Rahon, a transfer from Santa Clara who is a three-point shooter who can do more than spot up and has been valuable off the bench.

"I think this team is like Butler," Frieder said, referring to the surprise team that reached the NCAA championship game against Duke last season. "I think they could go deep in the tournament. The Sweet 16 is an excellent possibility, or even beyond."

Those are quite the predictions for a school that has never won an NCAA tournament game.

"You know what, not winning an NCAA game doesn't bother me, because the coach has won NCAA games and knows how to handle those situations," Frieder said.

Nobody knows that better than Frieder. He has a 1989 championship ring, purchased for him by Fisher after Michigan refused to give him one.

**30**  
**Aztecs give city's fans badly needed doses of comfort and joy**

By Tim Sullivan | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 8, 2010

The best team in town will not be moving to Los Angeles. It will not be forced to trade its best player for a lack of funds. It is not seeking public subsidy for a new playpen, does not withhold television programming over unsold seats and does not fuel suspicion of inadequate financing by buying its franchise on the installment plan.

Undefeated, undemanding and undiminished by the financial constraints of the small-market sports world, San Diego State's men's basketball team has been an unqualified delight at a troubling time in the city's sports history.

The Chargers are nearing elimination and, perhaps, relocation. The Padres have followed up on startling success with another disturbing talent drain, most recently the deal that sent slugger Adrian Gonzalez to Boston for Who, What and I Don't Know.

The atmosphere is acrid. The outlook is ominous. To reach a lower point on the local sports scene, you'd need Roseanne Barr serenading Donald Sterling during the Holy Roller game.

Enter the Aztecs.

Dare to dream.

"Our kids think they can play with anybody," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said Tuesday. "And I think we can. But also there are a whole lot of schools out there, starting with Cal (tonight), that can beat us bloody if we're not playing our A game."

Inasmuch as there's no strategic advantage in the idle boast, coaches generally exercise caution in evaluating their own teams. They try to manage expectations so that their fans don't assume too much, their players refrain from coasting and they don't get themselves fired for overpromising and underdelivering.

But having opened their season with eight straight victories, and with a chance to reach 9-0 tonight for the first time in school history, the Aztecs are creating euphoria that Fisher may be hard-pressed to control. Having opened the season with their first-ever Top 25 ranking, the Aztecs have since climbed to the No. 14 rung in The Associated Press poll and to 15th in the ESPN/USA Today Coaches Poll, and have become the highest-ranked team west of Waco, Texas.

SDSU's territorial dominance extends even further with a ninth-place showing in

the influential Ratings Percentage Index. In that numbers-driven pecking order, only No. 6 Kansas exceeds Fisher & Co. west of the Mississippi River.

These are huge breakthroughs for a basketball program that was awash in apathy upon Fisher's arrival in 1999. That year, the Aztecs' 15 home games attracted announced crowds totaling 39,266.

This season, in three home games, the Aztecs have averaged 10,167. The word is out and it's growing louder. With a powerful and seasoned front line and higher potency in the backcourt, the Aztecs have made 52 percent of their shots and averaged eight more rebounds per game than their opponents. They are getting persistent brilliance from their star, sophomore forward Kawhi Leonard, without leaning on him too heavily. They are getting balanced scoring across the floor, effective minutes from the far end of the bench and fewer than two turnovers per game from their poised point guard, D.J. Gay.

Though San Diego State has yet to win a single game in any NCAA Tournament, this team would seem to have all of the ingredients for a meaningful March except for tournament pedigree.

"We've got some good pieces," Fisher said. "We've got a team (that) with a little luck, and if we don't get stage fright, if we get (to the tournament), we could make some noise."

Tonight's game at Cal (5-2, but ranked 20th in the RPI) should adjust the volume level, up or down. Though the Aztecs have already won at Gonzaga, a road victory against a Pac-10 power carries its own measure of credibility.

"Undefeated, undemanding and undiminished by the financial constraints of the small-market sports world, San Diego State's men's basketball team has been an unqualified delight at a troubling time in the city's sports history."

- Tim Sullivan (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs give city's fans badly needed doses of comfort and joy")

"When we were initially voted first time ever in AP, I said, 'Wait and see if we're still around Dec. 9,'" Fisher said. "I knew that would be after Cal and we would have a little better measure about whether we were going to fight our way."

Whatever the result, a single nonconference game in December is more of a pop quiz than a final exam. It tells you where you are, not where you are likely to finish. Yet 21 years since his NCAA Championship at Michigan, Steve Fisher has already seen enough to appreciate his Aztecs' possibilities.

"It's fun," he said. "Fun for the kids, and us (coaches), too. Fun for me. I'd much rather be in this position than fighting for survival, fighting to tread water."

"You have to close your eyes and say, 'Why can't we win?'"

When you open your eyes, it's nice to see that there's at least one team in town that is both here to stay and going places.

**31**  
**No. 14 Aztecs get historic win at Cal**

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 9, 2010

When his San Diego State basketball team appeared in the Associated Press pre-season poll, the first AP ranking in school history, Coach Steve Fisher printed out copies of the poll and gave one to each player.

He told them to put it in their locker and look at it again on Dec. 9, the day after a pivotal game at Cal.

"Let's see how good we are then," Fisher said.

How good are they?

Good. With about six o's.

The No. 14 Aztecs passed yet another big test like a Nobel laureate acing a high school chemistry exam, blasting defending Pac-10 champion Cal at Cal 77-57 on Wednesday night to improve to 9-0 – the best start in 90 years of basketball on Montezuma Mesa.

It gets better: The win snapped a 19-game road losing streak against teams from Bowl Championship Series (or big six) conferences that goes back 14 years, and a

20-game road losing streak at Pac-10 schools that goes back 28.

It also allows Aztecs fans to dream a little. All that stands between this team and a 15-0 record (and almost certain Top 10 ranking) are five lower-level Division I opponents and Div. III Occidental.

"We're a good team," Fisher said. "To come in here and win the way we did lets a lot of people know that. It continues to create validity of who we are."

Or as forward Tim Shelton put it: "People are seeing a taste of what San Diego State can be."

The Aztecs did what they have in several games this season, which is lulling teams into a false sense of security in the first half, playing their bench liberally, missing open shots, muffing dunks, losing the handle on rebounds, getting in foul trouble, blowing leads.

Then yanking away the red cape in the second half.

First half: SDSU shot five air balls and led by two points.

Second half: SDSU shot 17-of-24, a preposterous 70.8 percent, and won by 20.

Even the official scorekeeper couldn't keep up. The stat sheet initially said the final score was 79-57 and gave Kawhi Leonard 22 points instead of 20.

But that's what happens when your bench goes 10, even 11, deep. Opposing team's starters play heavy minutes to stay close. Then they get tired. Then the Aztecs pounce.

Against Wichita State last week, it was a 14-0 run in 71 seconds after trailing early in the second half.

Wednesday night, Cal (5-3) led early in the second half and trailed by one with 13:38 left. With 9:38 left, it was 58-44.

It was a run fueled by equal parts fatigue (by Cal) and risk (by SDSU). Leonard and Malcolm Thomas both got their third fouls early in the second half, and Fisher made the decision to leave both in.

"I knew it was a little bit dicey," Fisher said, "but they are players who have been there. They know what to do to be out there contributing without doing something foolish, and they managed to do that. It was important, obviously, that they stayed on the floor."

SDSU had an opportunity to create some separation late in the first half and deflate the Cal crowd, taking a 28-20 lead behind consecutive steals by Chase Tapley. On Cal's ensuing possession, Tapley blocked a shot to start another fast break and a chance to push the margin to double digits.

Instead, D.J. Gay threw a behind-the-back pass into the stomach of a Cal player ... Thomas tried to dunk when a layup would have sufficed and missed ... Mehdi Cheriet airballed a three from the right corner ... and Cheriet fouled Cal guard Jorge Gutierrez (19 points) on a three-pointer with 5.6 seconds to go.

The result: What could have, probably should have, been a 10-point halftime lead was 28-26.

Momentum killed.

Crowd back into it.

Business as usual.

"We needed to make our energy better," Tapley said.

Which they did. Gay had all 14 of his points in the second half. Leonard had 13 of his 20. Billy White had eight of his 10.

In the Aztecs' six games away from home this season, they are plus-four points in the first half ... and plus-80 in the second half.

"San Diego State is good," Cal coach Mike Montgomery said. "They have some guys who can really play. Ironically, we had really focused on their bigs, and then it turns out D.J. Gay, Leonard and James Rahon (15 points) were the guys who hurt us. They made big shots, tough shots, late-clock shots.

"They just didn't even seem concerned that we were there."

#### NOTES

Other statistical keys to the game: Rahon had 11 of his points in the first half, including three three-pointers in the space of 2:28; Cal was 0-for-9 behind the arc; Cal had only two offensive rebounds in the second half after getting 12 in the first; and SDSU had only eight total turnovers ... The nine-game win streak is the longest of SDSU's 44-year Div. I era ... The last road win against a BCS team: 82-70 in overtime at Northwestern on Dec. 3, 1996. You have to go back even farther for a Pac-10 road win: 49-47 at Oregon on Dec. 1, 1982 ...

The Aztecs now have four true road wins (as opposed to a neutral court). The 13 teams ranked ahead of them in the AP poll entered Wednesday with five total road wins among them ... SDSU is now 29-81 against Pac-10 teams, including a 4-4 mark against Cal ... The game matched the last two California Mr. Basketballs in Kawhi Leonard and Cal's Allen Crabbe. They opened the game guarding one another, and Leonard definitely got the better of it – scoring seven of SDSU's first nine points ... Montgomery on Leonard: "(Crabbe) was guarding a pro."

#### 32

#### Best in Cali: SDSU rolls through Berkeley

By Diamond Leung | ESPN.com

December 9, 2010

So after thrashing California on the road, San Diego State has a clear path to a 15-0 start heading into Mountain West play.

Right, Steve Fisher?

"That's unfair to be asked," said the Aztecs coach, whose team is 9-0 after enduring the toughest part of its nonconference schedule. "Enjoy the last win."

Your thoughts on the soon-to-be 15-0 record, team captain D.J. Gay?

"I wouldn't say that just yet," he said with a smile.

San Diego State's swagger on the court is unprecedented, as thus far every single attempted attack on it has been successfully parried. But the Aztecs appear dead-set on living in the moment rather than looking too far ahead to what could very well end up a dream season.

The latest résumé-builder for the Aztecs was a trouncing of a young but dangerous Cal team that saw them turn a two-point halftime advantage into a 77-57 rout on Wednesday night.

San Diego State is not only off to the best start in school history, but has gotten battle-tested along the way.

Beating Gonzaga on the road was a program-changing event. Surviving Green Bay away from home despite trailing by 22 points showed the Aztecs could take a punch. Now wins against possible NCAA tournament teams Saint Mary's and Wichita State, followed by the snapping of a 20-game road losing streak against Pac-10 schools, means it could be smooth sailing for a while.

The possibility of a top-10 national ranking and beginning the new year undefeated has the city alive with excitement over a program that is still in search of its first NCAA tournament win.

"Our town probably is a bit unrealistic," Fisher said. "They think we can probably play the Celtics."

And to calm things down, the veteran coach has been telling his team that despite the hype, he thinks after watching UNLV play on television that the Rebels are the best in the Mountain West.

Did he make that declaration to light a fire under the preseason favorites?

Quite possibly, and against Cal, San Diego State showed that it's able to turn on the jets at any time.

Despite a sluggish first half and Kawhi Leonard and Billy White sitting with foul trouble, the Aztecs shot 70 percent after the break.

"It was a little dicey, but they're players that have been there," Fisher said of a team that returned all five starters this season.

Leonard scored 20 points, showing off his versatile game to NBA scouts in attendance by scoring inside and from beyond the arc. Gay and James Rahon combined to score 29 points and hit seven 3-pointers. The Aztecs' transition game appeared unstoppable at times with White getting his share of dunks.

Defensively, California's talented freshman wings, Gary Franklin and Allen Crabbe, were held to two field goals and six points combined.

"They're fast, they run, they have great length," Cal coach Mike Montgomery said. "They put a lot of pressure on us."

The onus is now on SDSU to avoid any letdowns against its underdog opponents heading into January. Before traveling to TCU for the league opener, the Aztecs have six home games in which they'll be an overwhelming favorites: San Diego, Cal Poly, UC Santa Barbara, San Francisco, IUPUI and Occidental.

So should this team be 15-0 heading into Mountain West play? Absolutely.

But according to Fisher, tuning out the hoopla and the overly excited San Diegans in their midst is important, too.

"I told our kids, 'Don't buy into that.'" he said. "The journey's the next game."

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### 33

#### San Diego State may be the best team on the West Coast

By Ann Killion | Sports Illustrated  
December 9, 2010

By the end of the game, when the San Diego State Aztecs were beating the reigning Pac-10 champions on their home court by 20 points, it was very loud in Haas Pavilion.

The raucous chant that rang out on the Cal Bears' home floor?

"Let's Go Aztecs!"

The Aztecs are making their presence known, not just in Berkeley but all up and down the West Coast. San Diego State, a school that has never won an NCAA tournament game and had never cracked the top 25 rankings until this fall, is off to its best start in school history, at 9-0.

The Aztecs may be the best team on the West Coast. "They're certainly one of them," said Mike Montgomery, who joined Saint Mary's Randy Bennett and Gonzaga's Mark Few as coaches who have lost to the No. 14 Aztecs this season. "San Diego State is good."

And San Diego State is excited. The 77-57 win over Cal on Wednesday continued a growing euphoria around the huge state school and its basketball program, a vibe that began when the Aztecs were ranked for the first time in their 90-year history this preseason.

"That was, what, October 23rd?" coach Steve Fisher said. "I told them wait 'til December 9th. Then we'll find out if we're tough enough."

Along the way the team handed Gonzaga a rare home loss, beat Saint Mary's at home and snapped a 20-game losing streak to Pac-10 opponents, winning on a Pac-10 court for the first time in 28 years.

So what is Fisher saying to his team this morning, on Dec. 9?

"It means we haven't fallen on our face, which sometimes happens," Fisher said.

Fisher knows about that. He won a national championship as the interim coach at Michigan in 1989 and then took the Wolverines back to two more Final Fours with his Fab Five recruiting class. But he was fired in 1997 during an investigation into program improprieties -- though he was later cleared of wrongdoing by the NCAA.

Fisher was hired at San Diego State in 1999. He inherited an afterthought of a program, with 13 losing seasons in 14 years. Fisher had to give away tickets on campus.

He's been steadily growing the program. The Aztecs have won 20 or more games for the past six seasons. Last March, they were bounced in the first round of the NCAA tournament in a close loss to Tennessee that the players knew could catapult them to bigger things.

"We knew this year could be very special for us," said point guard D.J. Gay. "This past summer we stuck close together and worked out and bonded. It really helped our team chemistry. The players are absolutely willing to buy in."

The Aztecs have a winning formula: senior leadership from Gay, Malcolm Thomas and Billy White; an NBA prospect in sophomore forward Kawhi Leonard; and depth. Sophomore James Rahon, who transferred from Santa Clara, came off the bench to score 15 points Wednesday, stretching the Bears' defense with his three-point range.

The team centerpiece is the 6-foot-7 Leonard, who started slowly Wednesday but finished with 20 points, including three three-pointers.

"He's clearly one of the better players on the West Coast," Montgomery said. "He's a pro."

All the Aztecs are learning to handle attention. They're the new kings of San Diego, a town without professional basketball. The school, with an enrollment of 35,000 and alumni all up and down California, has ignored its basketball team in the past. But now students and citizens are clamoring for tickets and taking over opposing gyms.

"Our town, they're a bit unrealistic in terms of what they think," Fisher said. "They think we could probably play the Celtics, and if Kevin Garnett didn't play we'd have a chance."

"I learned that San Diego is an event town and if you win they'll come. We had 3,500 students for the last two [sold-out] games. But if we go into the tank and lose a few we'll be back to having 5,000 in the building."

No one expects San Diego State to go in the tank. The Aztecs have navigated the treacherous part of their schedule flawlessly. Now they have a smooth path to early January and the start of Mountain West Conference play. A top-10 ranking could be in their future and a 15-0 start isn't out of the question.

Fisher thinks 15-0 talk is a little unfair, but he doesn't mind if his team hears about rankings and possibilities. He wants to let his underdog of a program know how good they are.

"We don't have a legacy of excellence in basketball," Fisher said, adding that when his team was ranked for the first time he told them "embrace it ... you're good."

"I think when you're home at night, you can close your eyes thinking about how good you are," Fisher said. "And I think we're pretty good."

And the rest of the basketball world is starting to think it, too.

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#### San Diego State Already Making History

By Michelle Smith | AOL FanHouse  
December 9, 2010

If it is a rebuilding year at Cal, it is a building year for San Diego State.

The Aztecs moved to 9-0 for the first time in the 90-year history of the program Wednesday night, taking apart the reigning Pac-10 champions, 77-57 on the Bears' home floor Wednesday night.

This was a date San Diego State had circled on its calendar, a measuring stick game. It ended with a blowout win, on the road against a Pac-10 school with a sizable contingent chanting "Let's Go Aztecs" as they left the floor with the win. San Diego State hadn't won in Berkeley since 1941 and they hadn't beaten a Pac-10 team on the road since 1982.

Steve Fisher's team is for real, ranked No. 14 in the nation and worthy of it.

"We have embraced it, we should be rated, we're good." Fisher said. "Look, we don't have a legacy of excellence in basketball. We've had some good teams. But this is the first time we've been rated."

The first time he told them it was OK to embrace their national ranking it was back in late October.

"I told them 'Wait 'til Dec. 9,'" Fisher said. "Are we still going to be ranked? Are we going to be good enough and tough enough?"

Dec. 9 was Wednesday night and the Aztecs looked good enough and tough enough, certainly against a Cal team that is learning lessons the hard way with four new starters and a bevy of freshman on the roster. Mike Montgomery isn't so much coaching as he is teaching.

Fisher, meanwhile, is shepherding a veteran team with four returning starters to a very exciting, and possibly unprecedented place.

SDSU began the season as a ranked team for the first time. The Aztecs are athletic and strong. They have an inside-outside game. They have a big road win at Gonzaga, back on Nov. 16, defeated St. Mary's at home by 14 points and now a dominating victory over the youthful Bears on a Pac-10 court.

"San Diego State is good," said Cal coach Mike Montgomery. "They've got some guys that can really play ... The mistakes we made turned out to be glaring mistakes."

Cal, which had two straight wins coming in, did not help itself. The Bears (5-3), already noteworthy this season for scoring just five points in a half against Notre Dame, hit seven shots in the first half in 29 attempts, missing point-blank far too often not to have to pay for it. They rallied to shoot 38 percent percent for the game, but were 0-for-9 from beyond the arc and turned the ball over 18 times.

Cal was down just 28-26 at halftime. The Bears took a 34-33 lead with 17:43 to go and were within 43-42 after forward Harper Kamp scored inside with 13:35 to go. But the Aztecs went on a 15-2 run from there and never looked back.

Cal was the first team all season to outrebound the Aztecs, but it made too many mistakes to stay in the game.

San Diego State has made a habit of overwhelming opponents in the second half (the Aztecs are outscoring opponents by 103 points after halftime for the season). They held firm to that again Wednesday.

Kawhi Leonard led the Aztecs with 20 points. Transfer James Rahon, who came to San Diego State via Santa Clara, scored 11 of his 15 points in the first half. D.J. Gay added 14 points.

"They've got seniors, they've got guys who have started and they've got depth and Steve's done a nice job with that," Montgomery said.

Cal, which saw a 22-game non-conference home win streak broken, got 19 points from veteran guard Jorge Gutierrez, the team's only returning starter, and 18 points from Kamp.

The Aztecs look like they could be the best team on the West Coast. Fisher joked that in San Diego the folks think that his team "could beat the Celtics if Kevin Garnett wasn't playing."

But he wants his players to put all that aside and be as good as they know they are, not as good as other think they might be.

"Other people are talking about that, and I've told our kids not to get into that," Fisher said. "Enjoy every part of the journey you're on and the journey is the next game. Don't look too far ahead of yourself."

"But I think when you are at home at night you can close your eyes thinking about how good you are. And I think we're pretty good."

**35  
Aztecs crush Toreros in basketball after early scare**

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 12, 2010

There were six minutes left in the first half, and USD was leading by seven points, and a few uneasy groans from San Diego State fans echoed through sold-out Viejas Arena – the nightmarish specter of losing to your crosstown rival with a computer rating of No. 341 (out of 345 Division I teams) no doubt racing through their heads.

But those were the uninitiated.

They'll learn.

The Aztecs provided another lesson in how they roll, looking like the nation's No. 214 team in the first half and every bit the No. 14 team in the second half to torch the rival Toreros 77-49 in front of the third straight sellout at Viejas Arena.

The score over the first 15 minutes: 25-18, USD.

The score over the final 25 minutes: 59-24, SDSU.

"When we were behind," SDSU coach Fisher said, "I don't think our kids even looked up at the scoreboard and said, 'Oh my goodness, we're down six or seven.'"

It was the fifth straight win by the Aztecs (10-0) against their rivals and eighth in the last nine meetings, and the 28-point margin equaled the largest in the 48 years these schools have been playing each other in basketball. It had SDSU students pointing at the modest USD fan section midway through the second half and chanting, "Little sister, little sister."

The fans in blue just sat there and took it, preferring to stay quiet and pretend this season isn't happening. The Toreros are 1-8 overall now and 0-8 against Division I opponents, with a stretch of six tough road games rumbling ominously on the horizon.

"I'm not going to lie, it's very frustrating," said senior guard Devin Ginty, who is oh-for-his-career against SDSU. "But don't confuse frustration with us giving up hope. We're definitely not losing hope. It's a long season."

**"[Devin] Ginty: 'The thing that's unique about San Diego State is they have the ability to turn the switch and make runs.'"**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs crush Toreros in basketball after early scare")

It is, and one of the most pressing questions about this Aztecs team is whether their propensity for slow starts, particularly against inferior opposition, will one day come back to bite them. This was the sixth time in nine games against Div. I foes that they have trailed by five or more points in the early going; against Wisconsin-Green Bay, they were down 22.

"We were probably outplayed in the first half," Fisher said. "There's a fine line between competing and competing your hardest. I felt like we competed, but I don't think for the first 20 minutes we competed like you have to at the Div. I level."

The Toreros started Chris Gabriel, who was averaging just nine minutes per game, and the move paid off. The 6-11, 286-pound center gave them some crucial early momentum, scoring their first six points for a 6-2 lead.

SDSU caught up but the Toreros continued to play a stingy zone defense and run their offense, and run it and run it and run, regularly milking the shot clock into single digits. Their lead went to four, and then six, and then Darian Norris hit an improbable fallaway three-pointer at the shot-clock buzzer to push it to seven.

Click went the light bulb.

Flip went the switch.

By halftime, thanks to James Rahon's deep three-pointer at the buzzer, it was 34-28, Aztecs.

Six minutes and change into the second half, it was 48-30. (For those without calculators handy, that's a 30-5 run.)

Ginty: "The thing that's unique about San Diego State is they have the ability to turn the switch and make runs."

Gay: "It's our depth, and our hunger to win."

USD had no answer for a lot of things, especially Malcolm Thomas. He had 18 of his game-high 20 points in the first half. Kawhi Leonard finished with 13 points and 13 rebounds, an impressive line considering he had zero and two at halftime. Gay had 16 points on 4-of-5 shooting behind the arc, which means he has made 8 of his last 10 three-point attempts.

The most lopsided statistic was points off turnovers: 19-2 for the Aztecs.

"Nothing is easy," Fisher said, "even when the final score looks like it is easy."

**NOTES**

Both teams have home 7 p.m. games on Monday, SDSU against Cal Poly San Luis

Obispo and USD against Div. III La Verne ... The game officially was sold out by early afternoon but there were a surprising number of empty seats scattered throughout Veijas Arena ... If the officials looked familiar, it's because the Aztecs saw two of the three on Wednesday night at Cal. Bruce Hicks and Tony Padilla worked both games, a referee scheduling quirk you almost never see ...

Gay and Billy White became the fourth and fifth Aztecs to go 4-0 against USD. The other three: Michael Cage, Eddy Gordon and Eddie Morris ... The 10-game winning streak is the longest in the Div. I era for SDSU, and the longest since it won 13 straight in 1955-56, when the Aztecs played as independents ... The other 28-point game was USD's 73-45 win in 1999.

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### Good times roll on for Aztecs in rout of USD

By Dan Hayes | North County Times  
December 12, 2010

Life is good on Montezuma Mesa.

After never once selling out Viejas Arena in consecutive games, the San Diego State men's basketball team played in front of its third straight home sellout on Saturday night. The school's No. 14 ranking -- its best ever -- is bound to improve when the newest Associated Press poll comes out on Monday.

And the Aztecs remained undefeated, improving to 10-0 by routing crosstown rival University of San Diego 77-49. The 28-point margin of victory was the largest ever in the two teams' 42 meetings.

"I knew things changed when I walked to the game and I saw somebody out with a sign saying, 'I need tickets,'" guard D.J. Gay said. "I knew that we were doing something special here, and we're just enjoying this ride."

If SDSU can maintain its perfect play, the journey could be considered spectacular by the time the calendar flips to January. With an upcoming schedule that includes home games against Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo, UC Santa Barbara and Occidental College, and neutral-site matchups with the University of San Francisco and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, the Aztecs could finish the nonconference portion of their schedule with a 15-0 record.

Just how good SDSU is was evident on Saturday when leading scorer Kawhi Leonard didn't score until the game was 26 minutes, 21 seconds old. Leonard's bucket, a jumper in the paint, stretched the Aztecs' lead to 48-30 with 13:39 left. It also concluded a 21-2 run that began right before the end of the first half. Leonard finished with 13 points and 13 rebounds.

After playing flat for the game's first 20 minutes, SDSU -- which made only six of its first 18 shots -- started strong in the second half when Gay took over. The senior hit three 3-pointers in a span of 2:36 and energized the crowd and his teammates. Gay made 6-of-8 shots from the field, including 4-of-5 from outside the arc.

"(Gay) came out on fire and really led us today," said senior Malcolm Thomas, who finished with a game-high 20 points.

The Aztecs closed a poor-shooting first half with a stretch in which they made 6-of-8 shots, including a 3-pointer by James Rahon right before the halftime buzzer.

SDSU's first-half offense relied almost entirely on Thomas' inside game, as he was able to overwhelm USD's post players. Thomas not only made 5-of-6 from the field, including a big dunk with 1:45 left in the half to give SDSU the lead for good, but he also was strong at the free-throw line (8-of-9) and scored 18 of the Aztecs' 34 first-half points.

The Toreros (1-8) led by as many as seven points early as Ken Rancifer and Chris Gabriel combined to make 7-of-8 shots inside. But after making 11-of-24 first-half shots, USD only made 9-of-28 in the second half.

"In the first half, I leaned over to (assistant coach) Mark Fisher and told him they're on their A-plus game," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "I think that we wore them down with our athleticism and size, and that is what you have to be

able to do."

This is the first time in Fisher's 20-year coaching career that his team has begun a season 10-0. And considering that in his first season at SDSU, the team was 5-23 and played in front of mostly-empty stands at home, Fisher is enjoying it as much as his players.

"We're getting a lot of recognition," Fisher said. "This is the first time we've ever had (three straight) sellout crowds, which is fantastic. ... Now we're good enough to win and it feels good.

"Hopefully we can keep it going."

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### SDSU's Gay bringing fire to court

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 13, 2010

D.J. Gay has found a cure for his heavy legs from the heavy minutes he regularly plays for San Diego State's basketball team.

"And all of us know that he's unafraid to take a big shot, and he does it repeatedly ... We're very fortunate to have him. He's an outstanding basketball player."

- Steve Fisher on D.J. Gay: Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "SDSU's Gay bringing fire to court")

"Ice baths," he said.

Great for the body, certainly, but this might not be the time to be cooling down the Aztecs captain and senior point guard. The guy is on fire.

Gay entered the season as a 35.6-percent career shooter, including 36.2 percent behind the three-point arc. Through 10 games this year: 50 percent from the field (41-of-82) and 47.8 percent (22-of-46) on threes.

Even more impressive is what he's done in the past three halves. Since the second half at Cal last week, Gay is shooting 78.6 percent and is a torrid 8-of-10 behind the arc.

He's also quarterbacking the No. 14 team in the nation, routinely covering the other team's best guard, has a better than 2-to-1 assist-to-turnover ratio and seldom comes off the floor. He played 37 minutes against Long Beach State, 38 against Gonzaga, 40 against Saint Mary's, 36 against Wichita State, and 37 against Cal, and he averaged 33.7 minutes in three games in three days in Ohio last month.

"I think at times D.J. goes underappreciated by others," said coach Steve Fisher, whose 10-0 Aztecs host Cal Poly San Luis Obispo on Monday night at 7. "His next dunk will be his first dunk. But he does everything that a coach could ever hope to have to win. He makes everybody smarter, everybody a little bit better.

"And all of us know that he's unafraid to take a big shot, and he does it repeatedly ... We're very fortunate to have him. He's an outstanding basketball player."

So outstanding that Fisher finds it difficult to take him out in close games. Gay's legs were so spent early in the season that he went to SDSU trainers looking for a solution. One suggested ice baths. They're cold, yes, but they also seemed to have worked.

"At halftime in the locker room we talked as a team about our low energy," Gay said after Saturday's 77-49 win against USD. "Something just seemed a little off. A couple players pulled me to the side and said, 'D.J. we're going to need you to step up.'"

The definition of stepping up: Gay drained three three-pointers in 2½ minutes to spark a 14-2 run that blew open a tight game.

Said forward Malcolm Thomas: "I told him (at halftime), 'You're going to have to lead us.' And he did. He just came out on fire."

#### Notes

The local TV rating for Saturday's game on Channel 4 was a respectable 3.1 with a 6 share ... SDSU and Cal Poly SLO played annually in the 1940s, '50s and '60s as part of the old CCAA, but this is just the third meeting at the Division I level and the first since 2003 ... The Mustangs (3-5), who are led by David Hanson's 15.8 ppg, are coming off a 72-61 loss at UCLA on Saturday ... Plenty of tickets remain for the game. It is not expected to sell out.

### 38 Sick Aztecs scrape by against Cal Poly

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 14, 2010

With a 10-0 record, a freshly-minted No. 11 national ranking, a 19-game nonconference home win streak and an opponent that had lost to Cal State Monterey Bay, the San Diego State Aztecs – good sports that they are -- figured they'd even out Monday night's game at Viejas Arena.

They spotted Cal Poly San Luis Obispo two starters, plus their aura of invincibility.

SDSU still won 51-45 to extend the third longest active winning streak in Division I to 11 games. But it was tough to know what to make of this finals-week mess, whether it was a gutty effort by the Aztecs with several cylinders not firing and a staggering 0-for-18 effort behind the three-point arc, or the first crack in the dam.

"It was a grueling game," said sophomore James Rahon, who got his first start at SDSU and had 14 points. "You're going to have some ugly ones, but we fought through it ... A win's a win."

Coach Steve Fisher said he was hopeful starters Chase Tapley and Kawhi Leonard would play after suffering from flu-like symptoms following Saturday's win against USD. Neither practiced much on Sunday, and both had IVs on Monday afternoon.

"Both were worse today than Sunday," Fisher said. "No one wants to play more than Chase, but he came in and said, 'I just can't go.' The doctor looked at him and sent him home. After warm-ups Kawhi said, 'I really, really feel bad but I'll be there if you need me down the stretch.'

"I almost put him in."

That's how hairy this got.

The Aztecs led by 12 midway through the second half, but with 38.8 seconds left it was a three-point game. With 14 seconds to go, lefty Shawn Lewis (14 points) drained another deep three-pointer to cut it to two, 47-45.

Of all things, it was free throws that bailed out SDSU. The team that ranked 320th in Div. I from the stripe last season made 17-of-18 in the second half, including eight straight in the final 39 seconds by D.J. Gay. The other promising stat line was Malcolm Thomas's 18 points, 15 rebounds, five blocks and three assists.

The rest of it was beyond hideous, particularly for a team that earlier in the day cracked the Top 10 in the ESPN/USA Today Coaches Poll, jumping five spots from the previous week to No. 10.

Cal Poly coach Joe Callero described his game plan thusly: "Let's go see what we can do, muck it up and play as ugly as we can. That's our style of basketball."

Or put it this way: In the first half the Mustangs shot 5-of-27 (18.5 percent), had five air balls, had six other shots swatted, attempted only three free throws, went the last 7:23 of the half without a basket, were in foul trouble and got killed on the boards.

And trailed by a point.  
SDSU 16, Cal Poly 15.

(You read that right.)

The Aztecs scored 14 points in 71 seconds against a Wichita State team that is getting votes in the Top 25. Against 3-6 Cal Poly, they needed nearly 17 minutes to get to 14.

"It was a bit like running in mud at the offensive end," said Fisher, whose team entered the game shooting 51.1 percent and went 16-of-46 (34.8 percent) and had a grand total of three points off fast breaks. "The harder we tried, the more we missed. Oh-for-18 from three-point range, that's not us ... Obviously we could not throw it in the ocean."

Here's how bad it was: Gay entered the game having made eight of his last 10 behind the arc; Monday night he was 1-of-11 overall, 0-of-7 on threes.

Not having Tapley and Leonard was more than just losing two starters. The reshuffled lineup moved Gay from point guard to off guard, and Fisher went with essentially a six-man rotation in the second half that did not include veteran forwards Brian Carlwell and Mehdi Cheriet and had Tim Shelton on the floor for only a few seconds.

That meant heavy minutes for true freshmen LaBradford Franklin and (no relation) Jamaal Franklin. They did some good things but they also did some true freshmen things, combining to shoot 1-of-7 and committing eight turnovers.

"It was really different without Kawhi and Chase on the court," Thomas said. "But we have to play through stuff like that."

#### NOTES

SDSU has the rest of the week off for finals before hosting UC Santa Barbara on Saturday night at 7 ... The attendance last night was 7,971, ending the record string of three straight sellouts at Viejas Arena ... It was the second time this season the Aztecs went oh-for-the-game behind the arc. They were 0-of-7 in a 79-70 win against Wisconsin-Green Bay, a game they trailed by 22 ... Bishop's School alum Maliik Love started as a freshman for Cal Poly and did not score in 25 minutes ...

The 11-game win streak is currently topped nationally by only Duke (20) and Cleveland State (12). BYU and Syracuse have each won 10 straight ... The Aztecs have won 22 straight home games against unranked opponents and 20 straight against unranked opponents at any location ... Three players fouled out: Billy White for SDSU, and Chris O'Brien and Jamal Johnson for Cal Poly ... Gay has made 15 of his last 18 free throws.

### 39 Sluggish Aztecs hold off Cal Poly

By Dan Hayes | North County Times  
December 14, 2010

D.J. Gay wasn't making much of anything until the final 38.8 seconds of Monday night's game.

Then the senior sank eight all-important free throws to allow illness-depleted No. 11 San Diego State to squeak past Cal Poly 51-45 at Viejas Arena.

With starters Kawhi Leonard and Chase Tapley too ill to play, the Aztecs led a sluggish game 16-15 at halftime and watched Cal Poly cut its deficit to 47-45 with 14 seconds to play. But San Diego State still secured its 11th straight victory on a night when it missed all 18 of its 3-point attempts.

"It was a bit like running in the mud at the offensive end," San Diego State coach Steve Fisher said. "The harder we tried, the more we missed.

"We made them when they were pressure filled."

Instead of celebrating the school's highest-ever basketball ranking -- SDSU also received the No. 10 ranking in the coaches poll -- the Aztecs (11-0) found themselves sweating when Shawn Lewis connected on a 3-pointer with 14 seconds left to cut the Mustangs' deficit to 47-45.

But Gay was fouled before the ball was inbounded and made both free throws to make it 49-45. Lewis then missed from 3 and Gay was fouled again with 5 seconds left. Gay -- who was 1-of-11 from the floor, including 0-for-7 on 3-point tries -- made two more free throws to seal the win.

"It was a grueling game," said guard James Rahon, who finished with 14 points. "You're going to have some ugly ones, but we fought through it."

SDSU learned only minutes before tipoff that it would be without leading scorer Leonard, who is averaging 16.3 points and 9.9 rebounds per game, and Tapley, who averages 7.8 points per game.

The Aztecs looked out of sync offensively from the start. They couldn't connect from the perimeter, where they had several good looks. If it weren't for the inside play of Malcolm Thomas -- 18 points, 15 rebounds -- SDSU would have had no first-half offense. The Aztecs made 7-of-21 from the floor and limped into the break with a 16-15 lead.

"It was really different without Kawhi and Chase on the court, but we have to play through stuff like that," said Thomas, who was 7-of-9 from the floor.



While Rahon -- a Torrey Pines High grad -- missed all four of his 3-point tries, he found his range with several buckets inside the key in the second half.

Rahon's 3-point play and a Billy White dunk highlighted an early 11-0 run that appeared to give SDSU a commanding 29-17 lead. Overall, the Mustangs (3-6) made only 29 percent of their shots. But they made 8-of-22 3-point tries, including three in the final 4:37 to rally.

"We definitely won't have another shooting night like that," Rahon said. "It was definitely a little bit frustrating after a while. We just had to change our mentality."

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#### Aztecs' Thomas talks the talk, to himself, with winning words

By Tim Sullivan | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 15, 2010

Malcolm Thomas has tried visualization and he has tried vocals.

He has stood at the free-throw line and imagined that he was shooting at the sea. He has contemplated basketball's uncontested 15-footer with music playing in his mind.

And then, consistently: "Clank."

"I've tried everything," San Diego State's spindly senior forward said. "I tried thinking about the ocean, (about) trying to throw something in the ocean. I've tried singing songs in my head. It just didn't work for me."

Thomas has had one glaring weakness: a troubling tendency to launch bricks from the line. As a junior, he was more accurate in traffic (.543) than he was standing still (.527), and he had made only half of his free throws this season as recently as a week ago.

But over his last three games, Thomas has found the range on 16 of his 21 free throws — eight out of nine Saturday against USD — by using his family to help fill the largest gap in his game.

"Mikeala ... Lori ... Sheala," Thomas says, reciting the names of his daughter, his mother and his sister before each attempt.

"Before, when I was shooting free throws, I was thinking, 'Man, if I miss.—...'" Thomas explained after the unbeaten Aztecs improved to 11-0 with a 51-45 victory over Cal Poly on Monday night. "Thinking of them puts me at ease."

Thomas says he's been using this mantra for more than a year, since his daughter was born in November of 2009, but the former Crawford High School star has only recently seen results. Aztecs coach Steve Fisher says he hadn't noticed Thomas talking to himself before free throws until he reviewed the video of the USD game.

"I didn't know what he was saying, and I didn't ask him...," Fisher said. "(But) If he can continue to do what he's done the last two games with his free-throw shooting, he's going to be a guy that people are going to have more than a handful (of difficulty) with."

On that score, Malcolm Thomas is a 6-foot-9 microcosm of San Diego State vulnerability. Despite their athleticism, their improved balance, their depth and their relentless rebounding, the 11th-ranked Aztecs (No. 10 in the coaches poll) were tied for 203rd place in Division I free-throw shooting as of Tuesday afternoon with a collective conversion rate of 67.0 percent.

This is an area that could stand improvement if the Aztecs expect to make a tournament run in March, when the difference between teams is more often determined by refined execution than raw ability. It is one of several areas in which Malcolm Thomas has been making meaningful strides.

"A year ago at this time, when things would go south on him a little bit, he would not run the floor," Fisher said. "He'd take a possession off because his mind would not be there. This year ... I thought that the last three games nobody on our team has played harder than he has. And that's converting from one end (of the floor) to the other, competing, going after every ball."

Maturity was an issue with Malcolm Thomas as recently as September, when a campus jaywalking stop spiraled into a night in jail. He has since learned to cross with the light and to better mask his frustrations on the court.

With two SDSU starters sidelined by flu-like symptoms, Thomas assumed broader responsibilities and a 36-minute workload without incident against Cal Poly, and contributed 18 points, 15 rebounds, five blocked shots and three assists. Statistically, at least, it was his strongest game of the season.

"Right now, if you throw the ball in the post, every time he gets the ball, I expect us to get a basket," Fisher said. "And I don't always expect it to be him. He'll either get a skip pass to D.J. (Gay) or (James) Rahon, or find Billy (White) or one of those bigs. ..."

"From the time he got here till the end of last year, he became a very, very skilled low-post passer. If a guy got open, he could find that open man. He's a much, much better defender now and a much smarter defender."

Thomas has yet to match the scoring and rebounding averages he put up as a freshman at Pepperdine, but some of that is a function of more talented teammates and stepping up in competitive class.

Walking to a geology final Monday with Billy White, Thomas learned that the Aztecs had cracked the coaches' Top 10 and felt a sudden surge of energy.

"My confidence level is probably at an all-time high," he said.

If Thomas is not yet the talk of the town, perhaps we should listen more closely.

**"Mikeala ... Lori ... Sheala," [Malcolm] Thomas says, reciting the names of his daughter, his mother and his sister before each attempt."**

- Tim Sullivan (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs' Thomas talks the talk, to himself, with winning words")

"I talk to myself a lot," he said. "My sister calls me crazy cause I talk to myself almost the whole game. If I do something wrong, I tell myself, 'I've got to do this next time.' Sometimes, I talk to my hands. I'm just weird."

Maybe so, but it's working.

41

#### Aztecs blast UCSB with wonder half

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 19, 2010

UC Santa Barbara coach Bob Williams was up on the sideline early in the first half, his suit jacket off, clapping his hands, his blue tie flapping as he waved his arms with instructions, his voice growing hoarse beseeching his players.

But at a certain point there is only so much a man can do, even a veteran, respected basketball coach such as Williams. He sat down, put his chin in his right palm and did like everyone else in soldout Viejas Arena on Saturday night.

He watched. In amazement.

This wasn't about Xs and Os. It was about adjectives and superlatives.

San Diego State showed why it almost certainly will climb into the Associated Press Top 10 when the new rankings are issued Monday, embarrassing a respectable UCSB team 90-64 with a first-half display that was as dominating as it was delectable.

"I just felt like they manhandled us," Williams said. "I don't see something they don't do. They have all the pieces."

And so much for any lingering doubts from Monday's near fiasco against Cal Poly San Luis Obispo or the 0-of-18 performance from three-point range or the struggles against zone defenses.

Or put it this way: The Aztecs scored 16 points in the first half and 51 in the game against Cal Poly. Saturday night, with Kawhi Leonard and Chase Tapley back from the flu, they had 57 at the half and led by 28.

Three-pointers? They missed their first two ... then made six of their next seven and finished 12-of-24.

UCSB's matchup zone that stifled No. 22 UNLV in Las Vegas three nights earlier?

The Aztecs undressed it, first with back cuts and dunks, then with a hail storm of threes.

Wavering confidence? The 11th-ranked Aztecs are now 12-0 and possess the nation's second-longest winning streak, behind only Duke's 20.

"It was more of a statement by the team that we're here to play," captain D.J. Gay said.

It was one of those halves when possibility touches reality, when opposing coaches look at the film and throw up their hands, when all those people sitting in the post-game traffic jam start thinking about travel plans for late March and early April.

"In my 11-plus years here, that was probably the best half we've played at both ends of the floor," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "We made a very good Santa Barbara team look not so good. And that one is on us."

The Aztecs have done that to good teams all season, just not this early and this emphatically, instead waiting until the second half to put down the hammer. Against the Gauchos (5-4), Fisher had his team full-court press from the opening tip to ramp up the energy and take them out of their halfcourt sets. And his staff's wrinkles to their double high-post offense gave the UCSB matchup zone fits.

And then, leading just 12-9, this happened: Gay drained 25-footer (or was it 27 or 28?) as the shot clock expired, ending a streak of 26 missed three-pointers that stretched across 61 minutes and parts of three games.

Seven minutes and five treys later, it was 36-21. At halftime, following a blistering 17-0 run, it was 57-29.

Said Fisher: "We could have shot it into a thimble and it would have gone in without hitting the sides."

The Aztecs stat line from the first half: 20-of-29 shooting (69 percent), 8-of-13 on threes (61.5 percent), 9-of-9 on free throws. Malcolm Thomas was 5-of-5 overall, Billy White 4-of-4, Chase Tapley 3-of-4 on threes, Gay 4-of-7 on threes.

"We would have much rather had them shoot the way they did against Cal Poly," Williams said. "That would have made it a much more interesting contest. If they were good hosts, you would think they would actually do that when they bring somebody into their house."

#### NOTES

Fisher said he started James Rahon instead of Tapley because he didn't want to have both Leonard and Tapley, still weak from the flu, open the game together. He added that Tapley "probably" would reclaim his starting spot Tuesday against USF in the Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic ...

Including the second half against Cal Poly, the Aztecs have made 31 of their last 35 free throws ... SDSU is one of nine remaining undefeated teams in the country ... The 28-point halftime lead was the largest in seven seasons ... The 57 first-half points were the most since scoring 58 against Campbell on Dec. 12, 2006 ...

UCSB entered the game as the only Division I team with two 20-point scorers. James Nunnally and Orlando Johnson each finished with 15 points but shot a combined 10-of-29 ... The Gauchos actually outrebounded the Aztecs 34-32 ... Late-game highlights: An alley-oop dunk by freshman Jamaal Franklin, and a three-pointer by 6-foot-11 center Brian Carlwell ...

UCSB freshman Troy Leaf, a Foothills Christian High alum, had his own fan club in one corner of Viejas Arena, all wearing blue and yellow (Santa Barbara colors) T-shirts with "Leaf 43" on the front. His stat line: 2-of-6 shooting, five points, three rebounds, three turnovers in 11 minutes (both baskets came in second-half garbage time) ... UCSB forward Jon Pastorek, who transferred from SDSU after two seasons, had two points and three rebounds in 12 minutes.

#### 42

### Suddenly, San Diego fans have caught hoops fever

By Tim Sullivan | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 19, 2010

There is a myth that San Diego is ambivalent about indoor sports, and another that San Diego State's students are apathetic. There is this laughable lunacy that basketball struggles for an audience here because there is, for want of specifics, Too Much To Do.

There are people in this town who would have you think that the beach is as much of a magnet at 7 p.m. on a December night as it is at noon in June, that high-caliber hoops has no more natural constituency in Southern California than does snowmobiling.

**"For despite this city's customary complacency and innate inertia, Steve Fisher and Friends have become a compelling attraction playing to capacity crowds and attracting national notice."**

- Tim Sullivan (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Suddenly, San Diego fans have caught hoops fever")

The people who promulgate this sort of piffle might want to stop by Viejas Arena some evening when the Aztecs are in action. That is, of course, provided that they can find a ticket. For despite this city's customary complacency and innate inertia, Steve Fisher and Friends have become a compelling attraction playing to capacity crowds and attracting national notice.

Saturday's 90-64 rout of UC Santa Barbara was the Aztecs' 12th victory in a still unblemished basketball season. It was as solid and stylish an effort as Monday's conquest of Cal Poly was sloppy, and it ensured that SDSU would start Christmas week as one of nine Division I unbeaten and ranked comfortably among the Top 10 in both national polls.

Wait. Did you just feel that? Was that a tremor, or a paradigm shifting?

"I remember when they were playing at the Sports Arena," said Ted Leitner, the Voice of Experience. "It was like the old joke: What time is the game? What time can you get here?"

No more. Seismic change has struck Montezuma Mesa, and suddenly. Just two years ago, Santa Barbara's Gauchos came to SDSU for a December nonconference game between semesters, and the crowd was announced as 5,042. Saturday night, 12,414 spectators showed up to watch the same two schools.

"Everybody loves to win," Fisher said. "People say San Diego is a town for winners; if you win, you will have them storming the gates, and we've won. I do believe the way we finished last season, with most of the kids coming back and playing as well as we did down the stretch that there was some excitement for the beginning of the year.

"Obviously, being (ranked) got the students' attention, the fans' attention and our attention. ... Our finals are over. Most of the time (our students) would have found something better to do. But tonight, they said, 'We are going to go (to the game) and then find something else to do after the game.'"

This was the fourth sellout in the Aztecs' six home games, and raises a question that would have seemed silly not so long ago: You don't suppose they built the arena too small?

Answer: "No," Fisher said. "We do not need a bigger building. Put that extra money in the coach's salary."

Euphoria has its place, but you shouldn't make plans based on the premise of perfection. You can't assume that Aztec Fever is a chronic condition when it may prove to be just a passing phase. Fisher can hardly expect to annually return every regular from a 25-win team and, consequently, is unlikely to be in a position to satisfy the bloodlust of his fans by bludgeoning respectable opponents such as UCSB.

It won't be every year, much less every week, that the Aztecs will play a first half as fine as they did Saturday, when they outscored the Gauchos 57-29 while shooting 69 percent from the field. Most nights, the Aztecs are just so long, athletic and deep that they simply wear opponents down. But this was one of those nights, Fisher said, when the Aztecs could have shot the ball into a thimble without scraping the sides; probably the best half of basketball he has coached in San Diego.

"We've gone from a team of having all the talent but not being able to get it

done to a team that is expected to get it done," said senior point guard D.J. Gay. "When we play at home, people expect us to win. People expect us to blow teams out. There's no doubt in people's minds.

"My freshman and sophomore year, it was a little different. People knew we had a good team, but just weren't fully convinced. I think (last season) sent it over the top. That was the perfect setup for this season, winning the (Mountain West Conference) championship."

Saturday night was the perfect setup for the next round of national polls. With Baylor, Kansas State and Tennessee all losing since the last balloting, the Aztecs figure to start next week about No. 8 nationally.

Imagine that.

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### Thomas leads No. 11 SDSU to win over UCSB

By Dan Hayes | North County Times  
December 19, 2010

Just how high will the San Diego State men's basketball team rise when the newest polls arrive on Monday?

The 11th-ranked Aztecs couldn't have been much hotter on Saturday night when they shot 69 percent from the floor in the first half and manhandled UC Santa Barbara 90-64 at Viejas Arena. The victory followed a performance five nights earlier in which SDSU missed all 18 of its 3-point tries. On Saturday, the Aztecs made 12-of-24 3-point tries to improve to 12-0.

That mark should easily land SDSU inside the Associated Press top 10 after four of the five teams directly ahead of it lost at least one game during the week.

The Aztecs are one of nine undefeated teams remaining in the country, and their 12-game winning streak is the second longest in the nation behind top-ranked Duke. It also matches the longest winning streak of Steve Fisher's entire coaching career.

"That first half was a little more to our liking and a lot more fun than Monday," Fisher said. "(In 11 years here) that was probably the best half we've played and it was against a good team.

"We made a very good Santa Barbara team look not so good today.

"In the first half we could have shot it into a thimble and it would have went in."

On Monday, an illness-depleted SDSU squad that was without Kawhi Leonard and Chase Tapley couldn't buy a bucket in a six-point win over Cal Poly.

On Saturday, the Aztecs barely misfired in the game's first 20 minutes.

D.J. Gay and James Rahon each missed their first 3-point tries of the half.

Then Gay ended a stretch of 20 straight team misses from 3-point range with a 24-foot basket with 13 minutes, 25 seconds left. Gay (12 points) added three more 3s before the half and Chase Tapley's 3-pointer with 4 seconds left -- one that opened up a 57-29 halftime lead -- was the team's eighth make in 13 tries.

"I just felt comfortable out there," said Gay, who was 0-for-7 on Monday. "Everybody has an off night."

With Leonard and Tapley back in the fold, SDSU's all-around game was at full force. The Aztecs applied a full-court pressure on a Santa Barbara team fresh off a win over No. 22 Nevada-Las Vegas for most of the first half causing the Gauchos to rush their shots. UCSB finished with 13 turnovers, which led to 25 points for the Aztecs, who had six players score in double figures.

Malcolm Thomas scored a game-high 18 points on 7-of-8 shooting. Thomas -- who carried the Aztecs with 18 points, 15 rebounds in Monday's win -- also had 10 rebounds and four assists.

"I'm just playing hard at both ends," Thomas said.

San Diego State has never been higher in the polls than its current ranking. But that should change on Monday considering that No. 6 Kansas State, No. 9 Baylor and No. 10 Pittsburgh all lost once and No. 7 Tennessee lost twice since Monday.

"We're enjoying the moment," Gay said. "There's a big buzz going around on campus."

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### Aztecs Top Ten? Even They Don't Want to Believe It

By Tom Krasovic | AOL FanHouse  
December 19, 2010

As the San Diego State basketball story continues to grow, I have visions of pixie dust descending on the Aztecs. Their burgeoning success feels a bit unreal because there is no framework for it. San Diego State just does not matter in men's basketball. At least, it never did matter to the sport's poll-makers. Until a month ago, in fact, San Diego State had never been ranked in its 90 years of basketball. San Diego State was like Greenland -- large but largely inconspicuous. Here is a big public university in heavily populated Southern California. Yet: Eighty-nine years, never ranked.

Now, as if a higher force bestowed powers to make up for those decades, San Diego State is 12-0 and rising in the polls every week. Recent bursts of helium into the SDSU balloon likely will have the Aztecs among the Top 10 when the next polls come out. How strange the sight will be: San Diego State with a single digit in front of it. San Diego State near some of the bluest of basketball's blue bloods; Duke, Kansas, Connecticut. Syracuse ... San Diego State.

I wrote three weeks ago that San Diego State is the best team in the West; nonetheless, the idea of SDSU as a national presence remains more concept than reality. It's only December, basketball's version of spring training. That's part of why it doesn't all feel real. It's only December.

"We lose a couple of games, and all of this goes away," said senior point guard D.J. Gay on Saturday.

He added: "As a team we talked about it -- that (rankings) number really means nothing until we get to the NCAA Tournament."

A scenic view is its own reward, though, and when San Diego State trucks by on ESPN's rankings ticker this week, have no doubt that Tony Gwynn will smile. And Marshall Faulk will smile. And Michael Cage will smile. Heck, if she sees the polls, Raquel Welch might smile, too, because like the others, she attended San Diego State.\*

**"As a team we talked about it -- that (rankings) number really means nothing until we get to the NCAA Tournament."**

- Tom Krasovic with D.J. Gay (AOL FanHouse - "Aztecs Top Ten? Even They Don't Want to Believe It")

\* If you're too young to know who Raquel Welch is, Google her. You probably won't be disappointed if you're of the XY chromosome. Gwynn, who recently underwent radiation treatment for cancer near his salivary gland, is the baseball Hall of Famer after whom SDSU's baseball stadium is named. Less known is that he was a slick point guard for the Aztecs and is still the school's assist leader. Faulk was a Heisman finalist at SDSU. Cage was a second-team All-American who would go on to play 15 years in the NBA.

San Diego State coach Steve Fisher remembers when it was strange not to be ranked among the sport's elite. Of course, Fisher was working then in Ann Arbor. The grandfatherly, yet still cherubic face of the SDSU program both to the outside world and within the SDSU media guide, where 31 photos of him appear, Fisher directed the University of Michigan to its only national title in 1989 and two more NCAA championship games in the early 1990s.

Saturday night, Fisher saw his swift players give a sellout crowd and the visiting opponent a taste of Showtime that would've made Michigan's famed Fab Five, and perhaps the nearby Lakers, exchange chest bumps. The Aztecs made 69 percent of their floor shots in the first half against UC Santa Barbara and led at halftime, 57-29. Three days earlier, UCSB (6-4) had won at No. 22 UNLV, so Gauchos coach Bob Williams was asked to compare the two Mountain West Conference teams.

He rated UNLV a tad quicker on the perimeter and perhaps more physical defensively but said SDSU "is so much better around the rim" that it will pose matchup problems for the Rebels and others.

"They are a really, really talented team," said Williams, who has directed the

Gauchos to two NCAA tournaments and five Big West titles in his 12 seasons. "I don't see something they don't do. They have all of the pieces."

Defense, rebounding and unselfishness are SDSU's strengths. Free throws are its Kryptonite, but against the Gauchos, all nine of its first-half free throws were good, along with eight of 13 three-pointers.

"We could've shot it into a thimble and it would've gone in, without hitting a side," Fisher said after the 90-64 victory.

"You play maybe a little better than you are, and maybe we did that, but if we guard really hard, then we'll have opportunities to make easy baskets, which makes you feel good about yourself. Then, your 3s don't seem so forced (and) worrisome."

One of nine unbeaten teams and behind only Duke for the longest active winning streak, San Diego State will be 15-0 when the crystal ball and confetti usher in 2011. Unless, that is, San Francisco, IUPUI or Occidental tosses a banana peel under its feet.

Somewhere ahead, the Aztecs probably will miss too many open shots to survive. They got away with missing all 18 of their 3s against Cal Poly a week ago. In the Mountain West, travel fatigue and elevation will further test them beyond the competition.

Gay, for his part, is concerned about how the Aztecs are performing once the ball is tossed in the air, notwithstanding Saturday's fast start.

"We come out with low energy," he said. "We've been down 20 points. The games that we should be blowing teams out, we're keeping it close. That could come back to haunt us.

"Free throws are always something we can work at," he added.

Whether Fisher and his players can continue to exploit teams in ways distinctive to the calendar also is in question. Two coaches of SDSU's recent victims -- Randy Bennett of Saint Mary's and UCSB's Williams -- each said that San Diego State "exposed" flaws that may not be as pronounced later in the season.

Bennett said his team was still learning how to deal with the bedlam of bad stretches on the road when it withered before a boisterous crowd. Williams said his team panicked as the Aztecs made shot after shot.

"I'm sure they gave people a model of how to attack our zone," he added.

Schedule dynamics also have favored SDSU. "We floated into a perfect storm for San Diego State," Williams said, noting that his team's upset of UNLV, coupled with SDSU's near loss to Cal Poly, likely commanded full attention of Aztecs players leading up to the game.

But barring injuries, the Aztecs should remain the West's top team.

They can draw on both advanced athleticism and know-how when other variables work against them. Four seniors are among their nine regulars. The senior who is Fisher's proxy on the court, Gay, has played in all 114 games since stepping onto campus. He continues to evolve at the point, where he never played until a year ago.

It will take an unusually athletic team to contain SDSU's frontcourt. Take Gonzaga, which won at No. 9 Baylor on Saturday and lost at home to the Aztecs. The Zags were unable to match SDSU's springy group of 6-foot-6 sophomore Kawhi Leonard, 6-9 senior center Malcolm Thomas and particularly 6-8 senior Billy White. Saturday, when Fisher revved up the game's tempo, the quick, long-armed trio fronted SDSU's diamond-shaped full-court press and swarmed UCSB's guards and wings.

"Kawhi Leonard is special," said Williams, using a coach-speak term that means NBA prospect. "I don't know whether (Thomas) is a guy at that next level, but he's so quick, and he's so long, and he's so quick to the ball." A lefty who scored 30 at Gonzaga and is shooting 64 percent on the season, the 235-pound White thwarted UCSB's hottest scorer of late, James Nunnally.

At one point as he talked about the Aztecs, Williams smiled and shook his head.

"Boy," he said, "they're having fun."

Said Fisher: "It's fun when you're winning. You can smile. Losers say, 'Deal the next hand.' Winners smile and say, 'Forget about some of the turnovers we had.'"

The Aztecs are also discovering that in the rarefied air where they now live, there's no reason to surf the Internet or watch ESPN to find out where they stand in the AP and coaches polls. They were 11th and 10th, respectively, going into Saturday's game and knew of it almost through osmosis.

"I always wake up to a text message telling me where we're at in the polls," Gay said, smiling. "None of this stuff means anything until tournament time. So we take it for what it is. We enjoy this journey, but at the end of the day, we still have to go out and perform for it to mean anything."

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### White gains notice as No. 7 Aztecs rise

By Steve Carp | Las Vegas Review-Journal  
December 21, 2010

Billy White never has lacked motivation.

"I've taken great pleasure watching him mature and enjoy being part of a winning program," Fisher said. "Billy's such a nice young kid. He wants to please everybody and we're proud of the job he's done."

- Steve Carp (Las Vegas Review-Journal -  
"White gains notice as No. 7 Aztecs rise")

Since his days at Green Valley High School, White has tried to disprove his doubters. His talent was never in question, but detractors wondered about his work ethic, consistency and willingness to conform. Basketball came easily to White, and perhaps some confused effortlessness with laziness.

Now a 6-foot-8-inch senior forward averaging 11.1 points for seventh-ranked San Diego State, White has begun to catch the eye of NBA scouts when they attend Aztecs games to watch his teammates Kawhi Leonard and Malcolm Thomas.

"A lot of people didn't think I'd make it," White said. "I'd hear things and all it did was make me want to prove everyone wrong."

White is back in his hometown a few days before Christmas to play in the Holiday Hoops Classic at South Point Arena. San Diego State (12-0) plays San Francisco (4-5) at 7 p.m. today and Indiana-Purdue-Indianapolis (5-7) at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

"I'm looking forward to that," White said. "It's always fun to play in front of family and friends."

Even the critics, too.

White's few remaining doubters will point to the holes in his game -- such as 64 percent free-throw shooting -- and say he's got no shot at the NBA.

White insists he's having too much fun playing for a nationally ranked team, off to the best start in school history, to worry. He has six double-doubles, is shooting 62 percent from the floor and also averages 3.9 rebounds and 1.8 assists.

"It's been great," White said. "We're having so much fun, it's a great team to be part of. Everyone gets along with each other. There's no selfishness whatsoever."

Coach Steve Fisher recruited White by stressing that he wanted him to play a role in building San Diego State into a basketball power. White, who was pursued by big schools throughout the West, including UNLV, wanted to leave Las Vegas.

"It couldn't have worked out any better," he said. "I was struggling during my freshman year, but all the coaches showed me a lot of love and that meant a lot to me."

Fisher said it was only a matter of time before White figured out how to excel at the Division I level.

"I've taken great pleasure watching him mature and enjoy being part of a winning program," Fisher said. "Billy's such a nice young kid. He wants to please

everybody and we're proud of the job he's done."

Fisher said the critics were predicting that White would wash out and be gone from San Diego State after a year. Not only is White still there, he's playing like an all-Mountain West Conference performer. He scored a career-high 30 points against Gonzaga on Nov. 16 and had 24 against Wichita State on Dec. 4.

"I think a year from now, Billy's going to be playing for pay somewhere," Fisher said. "The biggest hurdle he's had to overcome is dealing with the frustration when things don't go well for him. He's still dealing with that to a degree. But he has finally realized if he's active and moves, things happen."

White admits his unselfish play has worked to his advantage and benefited the team. His interior passing skills have helped Leonard and Thomas maximize their talent, and he is getting to more rebounds because he can play without the ball.

"Actually, the coaches want me to score a little more," White said. "I've always tried to be a pass-first kind of player. With the kind of team we have that has so much talent, it's easy to give up the ball because we have so many guys who can score."

As for talk of an NBA future, White said he's blocking that out until after the season.

"It's hard not to look at it, but my teammates are keeping me focused," White said. "It's a long season. A lot of things can happen -- an injury, a slump. But I'm glad people are noticing us."

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### Sloppy Aztecs nearly tossed by USF

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 22, 2010

Maybe it was the equestrian center turned basketball arena. Maybe it was fuzzy lighting, or the billboards for boots and cowboy hats, or flies buzzing around indoors. Maybe it was the cramped temporary trailers as locker rooms, or the Porta-Pottys as player bathrooms.

Maybe it was having to shoot in the first half against an open backdrop with a giant sign that read: "Ride like a champion today."

Whatever it was, it wasn't good for the No. 7 San Diego State Aztecs. To put it in terms appropriate for the venue: They nearly got bucked off the bull.

But they stayed in the saddle just long enough to survive, winning 62-56 on Tuesday night in the Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic against a University of San Francisco team that starts two freshmen and two sophomores, that came into the game with an RPI of No. 190, that beat the NAIAs' Holy Names by three points at home.

"We won the game," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "That's the only positive."

Even worse news could come later, depending on a possible doctor's visit by forward Malcolm Thomas. Someone stepped on his left foot late in the game, he twisted it awkwardly and collapsed to the South Point Arena & Equestrian Center court in agony. He exited the arena on his own power with an ice pack strapped to his foot, but he remains questionable for tonight's 7 p.m. game here against IUPUI.

Admitted Fisher: "I'm worried about it."

That, and everything else about Tuesday night.

"We got outplayed, we got outworked," captain D.J. Gay said. "It definitely wasn't Aztecs basketball. Somehow, some way we have to fix it. We've got to fix it. Going into league, we can't have this.

"It's something that definitely needs to change."

Midway through the first half, the big question wasn't whether the Aztecs (13-0) would win but whether USF (4-7) would reach double figures. It was 14-5 with just over 11 minutes left in the half, and the only reason SDSU didn't lead by 20 was because of its own offensive inefficiencies.

Then Michael Williams, a 6-foot sophomore from Van Nuys who averaged 5.5 points last season, got hot. Nuclear hot.

Williams scored 14 of USF's 20 points over a nine-minute stretch, and when Angelo Caloiaro drained a deep three at the halftime buzzer it was 31-31. The Dons opened the second half by patiently running their motion offense for a layup, and it was officially nervous time.

The Aztecs never were behind by more than two points, but it was 43-41 with 7:41 left – the latest they have trailed this season. The game was tied 13 times, including as late as 5:12 to go.

"It's just us not being mentally focused for the game," Kawhi Leonard said, "and taking opponents lightly."

It was Leonard who bailed out the Aztecs, finishing with season highs in points (23) and rebounds (14), much of it coming in a crucial stretch in the second half when the game hung perilously in the balance.

Gay had hit a three-pointer to make it 48-45, SDSU, only for USF's Caloiaro to tie it with a three at the other end. Eighteen seconds later, Leonard rattled in a three-pointer from the right corner to ignite a 9-2 run that essentially put the game away.

It wasn't 14 points in 71 seconds (the Wichita State game) or 57 points in the first half (UCSB) or overcoming a 22-point deficit (Green Bay), but on this night a modest 9-2 run seemed like a monumental achievement.

"We did some things that bothered them," said USF coach Rex Walters, who mixed in a triangle-and-two defense and a four-corners offense. "We controlled tempo. Our bigs did a good job against their bigs. I don't think they played particularly well, but good teams find a way to win."

Another factor may have been the arena configuration, with a black curtain behind one basket. The Aztecs went toward the open end – which presented a tougher shooting backdrop in terms of depth perception – in the first half and were 12-of-28. They were 12-of-19 in the second half.

The Dons were 5-of-8 behind the three-point line in the first half, shooting at the basket backed by the black curtain. In the second half, they were 1-of-8.

There also were the lingering effects of last week's flu on Leonard and fellow starter Chase Tapley (four points, three turnovers), and the more current effects on Gay, who still managed 14 points in 34 minutes. And the plethora of questionable calls by the referees. And the lighting and denim billboards and Porta-Pottys.

Fisher wasn't hearing any of it.

"We've got no excuses," he said. "We were sloppy and it showed. We were very, very fortunate to win this game ... The more talented team won, and the harder-working team lost. Sometimes basketball is unfair."

#### NOTES

More from the bad-night file: SDSU was outrebounded 32-30 by the smaller Dons, who had 13 offensive boards. It also got only three points from its bench, a first-half trey by Alec Williams. The bench's combined line: 1-of-7 shooting, four rebounds, two steals, two turnovers in 40 minutes ... The biggest bonehead play of the night: Billy White's turnover in the second half for stepping over the baseline on an inbounds pass with no defensive pressure within 40 feet ... The Aztecs had just three assists in the first half (vs. six turnovers) on 12 baskets ... The 15 turnovers were their second most this season.

It was SDSU's seventh straight road/neutral win (all this season), a school record. That's at least three more than any of the six teams ranked ahead of SDSU ... The 13 straight wins represent the longest streak in Fisher's 21 seasons as a head coach ... USF's Williams cooled down in the second half, scoring just two points to finish with 16. Caloiaro and Perris Blackwell both had 14.

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### SDSU survives another close one, beating IUPUI by 2

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
December 23, 2010

IUPUI is sort like that villain in the horror flick that won't go away, no matter how many times you think you've killed it.

Wasn't San Diego State just playing the Jaguars ... in a near-empty gym ... flus-

tered by a matchup zone ... unable to shoot three-pointers ... losing at halftime ... with a Steak 'n Shake around the corner? What kind of sick joke was this?

Weren't the Aztecs in the Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic at the South Point Arena now?

They were, and so was Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (and a Steak 'n Shake, the Midwestern burger joint newly opened in the adjoining casino).

The No. 7 Aztecs put them away again after much consternation, winning 56-54 in a game that was eerily similar to their Nov. 21 encounter in a near-empty gym in Oxford, Ohio, with, yes, a Steak 'n Shake just down the highway.

Only this one was closer.

This close: IUPUI had the ball down two points inside 30 seconds left, and held the ball as the clock ticked into single digits for what Coach Ron Hunter wanted to be a game-winning three by leading scorer Alex Young.

"My guys were tired," Hunter said. "I didn't want to go to overtime. I was yelling to take a three to win it."

Except Young didn't hear him and instead took a jumper one dribble inside the arc.

"I'm upset about that," said Young, who had a game-high 19 points. "It was missed communication."

And a missed shot. Billy White got the rebound and SDSU ran out the clock to push their record to 14-0, the longest win streak in the 90-year history of basketball on Montezuma Mesa.

Fate, tempted again.

"What we do is not easy," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "We're not good enough where we're just going to walk out and beat teams to a pulp."

First, the good news: Senior forward Malcolm Thomas, who suffered what team staff described as "severe turf toe" the night before against USF, had 12 points and nine rebounds in 29 largely productive minutes. And IUPUI isn't on the schedule again this season.

The bad news: The Aztecs seemed to start their Christmas break after taking a 56-46 lead with 5:55 to go. They didn't score again, clanking three long jumpers and committing three turnovers.

It was the closest game of the season, and the second time in as many nights at this equestrian center disguised as a basketball arena (a couple weeks ago it hosted the Benny Binion Bucking Horse & Bull Sale) that they nearly succumbed to an unfancied opponent with a losing record and an RPI around 200. Tuesday's great escape came was 62-56 against USF.

"They definitely did their homework," said flu-stricken D.J. Gay, who finished with 18 points despite a 2-of-10 night from three-point range. "They must have watched tons of film from the first game, and I noticed they watched our game (against USF in person)."

The Jaguars (5-8) tweaked their matchup zone to counter SDSU's major adjustment in the first game, having its posts come high and set ball screens on the perimeter. The Aztecs never did figure it out and went deep into the shot clock on multiple possessions before jacking up a hurried jumper.

"Our defense kept us in the game," Hunter said.

Sound familiar? Last month in Oxford, Ohio, the Aztecs were 0-of-7 behind the three-point line in the first half and trailed 23-20. In Vegas, they were 1-of-10 and trailed 29-27.

The difference in Sin City was the Aztecs never got hot. In Ohio, they made five straight treys in the second half to blow the game open and win by 15. Here, they finished 3-of-20 behind the arc and blew most of a 47-34 lead.

Fisher, however, wasn't complaining about the effort or energy, something he was – to use his words – "carping about" the night before against USF. And he had to be pleased with Thomas, who wasn't a for-sure starter until moments before tipoff.

Thomas injured the toe late in Tuesday's game when someone stepped on it, then twisted it, then felt "instant pain." X-rays were negative for broken bones, but turf toe has been known to sideline NFL player weeks, even months.

Thomas's remedy? He dumped it in an ice bucket all afternoon, then taped it up and laced up his red sneakers.

"I kind of selfishly made up my mind to play," said Thomas, who had two huge blocks on the same IUPUI possession with 1:40 to go. "They asked me if I wanted to play (shortly before tipoff). I said, 'Yes!'"

#### NOTES

The Aztecs get five days off now, returning to practice Dec. 28 ahead of the New Year's Eve home game against Division III Occidental ... The Mountain West Conference season opens Jan. 5 at TCU ... No official attendance was given, but it had to be about 300 (or roughly the same as the previous night) ...

The previous record win streak was 13 by the 1955-56 team, which played in the NAIA ... SDSU was outrebounded for the second straight night, this time 28-23 ... White, who is from Las Vegas, picked up two quick fouls and sat out most of the first half. He finished with six points and four rebounds in 19 minutes, but did have a season-high four steals, all in the second half ...

Tim Shelton and his sore knees played on back-to-back nights for the first time this season, going 3-of-3 for six points ... Chase Tapley had five assists against no turnovers ... IUPUI, which led No. 2 Ohio State by nine points in the second half before losing, is now 0-11 all-time against ranked opponents.

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#### SDSU routs D-III Oxy in final nonconference game

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 1, 2011

When the opponent is known more for its liberal arts curriculum than its basketball team, and the score is 89-42 with 2:52 left, and your team is shooting 87.5 percent in the second half, and your freshman point guard just threw a behind-the-back bounce pass to a sophomore for a two-handed dunk, there is just one thing left to worry about.

Curly fries.

The San Diego State promotion grants every ticket holder a free order at Jack in the Box if the Aztecs hold a team under 50 points at home, and it was definitely do-able Friday afternoon against Division III Occidental at soldout Viejas Arena. Then Kris Montoya drained a three-pointer to give the Tigers 45.

Then Sam Stapleton hit a jumper for 47.

Then Jack Hanley, a backup guard who entered the game just 2-of-13 behind the arc, sized up a trey from the right side and figured why not. The net swished. The crowd groaned.

"A moral victory for us," said Occidental coach Brian Newhall, who pumped his fists when Hanley's shot found nylon.

The No. 7 Aztecs would win in every other capacity, beating the Tigers 93-50 to complete their nonconference schedule a perfect 15-0 and maintain the nation's best Div. I record. The 43-point margin was 10th largest in school history. The sellout was the fifth of the season – there were just eight in the building's first 13 seasons – and the first ever against a non-Div. I opponent.

More lopsided stats: SDSU missed only three of 24 shots in the second half and held a 42-13 rebounding margin.

Points in the paint: 46-12.

Second-chance points: 17-3.

Fast-break points: 17-2.

Bench scoring: 36-10.

"We didn't shock the world," Newhall said. "We weren't Chaminade. We weren't Hoosiers. We didn't win one for all the small schools out there ... And I've been in enough of these (games) to know we're getting about their C-plus interest level. I'm glad we didn't get their B game."

They didn't get Aztecs forward Billy White, who sat out with a protective boot on his sprained right ankle and ended a streak of 31 straight starts. Coach Steve Fisher said that despite initial concern, doctors assured him White has a "garden-variety ankle sprain" and should be "at peak efficiency" for the Mountain West Conference opener on Wednesday at TCU.

Ah, yes, the conference season.

Think of the Occidental game as last Tuesday, when San Diego was bathed in endless blue skies yet forecasters kept saying a major storm was rolling in that night (and boy, did it).

Friday in Viejas Arena was Chase Tapley throwing a lob that instead went straight into the basket, freshman Jamaal Franklin getting a ferocious tip dunk off a miss, James Rahon making three pointers from opposite corners in the space of 28 seconds, Malcolm Thomas getting a breakaway dunk and having to decide between a windmill and tomahawk (he chose the latter because "I was tired and I didn't want to miss, and I would have got in trouble for that").

But storm clouds loom on the horizon. The Mountain West Conference is an arduous trek through time zones and elevation and climate changes, and the Aztecs don't exactly back into it. There's the Wednesday night game at TCU, followed by a Saturday afternoon game at Utah, followed by UNLV at home, followed by New Mexico on the road.

"We have to close this chapter, which has been really good reading for us, and get ready for the next one," Fisher said. "It will be a whole lot harder to write."

In that regard, Occidental – or most Division III teams, for that matter – isn't the ideal preparation for what lies ahead. But Fisher didn't have much choice, between not having a budget to pay opponent guarantees for nonconference home games and no one exactly wanting to play an SDSU team returning four starters.

"In a perfect world, you would play somebody that you would have to roll up your sleeves and get a little dirty," Fisher said. "It is well documented that we had a difficult time filling our schedule this year. So this is what we did. It was the last game we got.

"This was good for camaraderie. This was good for (players) eight through 12. This was good for our team."

No one played more than 27 minutes, and no one got fewer than 13. Rahon emerged from what may or may not have been a shooting slump (he insists it wasn't) with 15 points after an oh-for pair of games in Las Vegas before the Christmas break. Alec Williams had nine points and four rebounds. Jamaal Franklin had six points on 3-of-3 shooting.

"A good confidence booster for us," said Tapley, who had 15 points, four rebounds, four assists and three steals.

But the clouds are nearing, and Fisher knows it.

Take New Year's Day off?

Think again. He called a 10:30 a.m. practice.

#### NOTES

Fisher had his team in a full-court press for most of the game, which could be a sign of things to come during the MWC season ... Also sitting out was forward Tim Shelton to rest his knees ... The Aztecs had runs of 11-0 and 13-0 in the second half, giving them 16 runs of 10 or more points this season ... There are only six other undefeated teams left in Div. I: Cincinnati, Duke, Kansas, Ohio State, Syracuse and Central Florida ... Ho-hum, another double-double for Kawhi Leonard: 14 points and 10 rebounds in 27 minutes ... Deshun McCoy led Occidental with 18 points ... No one on Occidental had more than four rebounds ... At one point in the second half, nine of the 10 players on the floor were freshmen or sophomores.

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### Preparing his players for rigors of league, Fisher sees smudges behind spotless record

By Tim Sullivan | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 2, 2011

Steve Fisher has a coach's eye for the concealed blemish. Though his San Diego State Aztecs enter the new year as the only 15-0 outfit in big-time men's college basketball, Fisher continues to find flaws, raise concerns, temper enthusiasm and pick nits.

He might be undefeated, but he is undeterred. The tuneups are over. Mountain West Conference season is at hand.

"I think we're playing good basketball," Fisher said after Friday's 93-50 bench-clearer against Occidental College. "(But) If we played 15 straight league games, we wouldn't be 15-0 the way we're playing. If we're going to go undefeated in the league, we're going to have to play better, and I don't know if anybody has gone undefeated in the league, and probably no one will. But to win in this league, and not have back-to-back-to-back losses, we're going to have to continue to get better."

**"He might be undefeated, but he is undeterred. The tuneups are over. Mountain West Conference season is at hand."**

- Tim Sullivan on Steve Fisher (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Preparing his players for rigors of league, Fisher sees smudges behind spotless record")

Specifically, Fisher frets about his team's turnover rate, its defensive rebounding and the general caliber of its guarding. Though none of these categories could be classified as an Aztec weakness, a vigilant coach is like an exterminator. If he can't find an actual adversary, he attacks the breeding grounds of potential problems, in this case overconfidence and complacency.

But though the Aztecs have yet to win a game in the NCAA Tournament, and though their start is ratcheting expectations toward the roof of Viejas Arena, Fisher may have some work to do if he wants his players to start worrying.

If SDSU's 11.4 turnover rate is unacceptable, for instance, it is nonetheless better than that of top-ranked Duke or 12-0 Kansas.

Not good enough, says Fisher.

"Who's the best team in pro football?" Fisher asked his players. The answer came back as "New England."

"They've gone seven games without a turnover," Fisher said. "Seven games without a turnover! That wins."

If the Aztecs are allowing too many offensive rebounds, Occidental managed only one of them in the first half of Friday's game — an unassigned "team rebound" necessary to balance the stat sheet.

If Division III Occidental proved an inadequate test on the cusp of conference play — a lingering hole in the schedule plugged for convenience rather than competition — it did help to illuminate the depth at Fisher's disposal. With Billy White sidelined by what Fisher described as a "garden-variety" ankle sprain, the talent gap between the two teams enabled Fisher to substitute early and aggressively. He would use 10 different players for a minimum of 13 minutes, apiece Brian Carlwell, Mehdi Cheriet and Alec Williams all logging their most playing time of the season. The freshman Franklins — LaBradford and Jamaal (no relation) — both contributed appealing and athletic previews of coming attractions.

"Everybody got some playing time, worked on their skills," said sophomore Chase Tapley, who missed only one of seven shots from the field in scoring 15 points. "It was a great confidence boost for some of our teammates and for us. It was a great win."

Greatness might be overstating it. Occidental's first shot was an ominous airball, and the height disparity between the starting fives totaled a full foot. Except for the experience of playing before a quasi-sellout (hundreds of empty seats, but all available tickets distributed), the Aztecs would surely derive more benefit from a spirited intrasquad scrimmage.

"Any time you're in a game atmosphere, you really can't resemble that in practice with 10,000 fans," SDSU guard James Rahon said. "I think it's good for all of us to be comfortable playing in an environment like that."

There is that. There is also a school of hoops thinking that finds value in the oc-

casual cakewalk in that it allows a coach to rest his regulars and reward those substitutes who are likely to languish in conference play. It's an opportunity to work on specific plays under semi-competitive conditions. Plus, you get to charge admission.

"I know the coaches," SDSU forward Malcolm Thomas said. "They wanted to work on ... throwing it in to the post. When we were up 30 (points), we were just trying to execute plays because we really haven't done well in that area in the past games. So we were just trying to work on execution."

Even undefeated teams can stand improvement, and some of them can stand quite a lot of it. Duke stands second nationally in scoring, but only No. 102 in rebounding. Unbeaten Cincinnati has shot just 45.2 percent from the field against a schedule ranked 333rd. Syracuse struggles from the free throw line. Ohio State and Kansas may be overly reliant on freshmen. Central Florida is 13-0 against a soft schedule, and only 2-0 on the road.

The Aztecs have their own issues, but only seven Division I teams begin the new year unbeaten. And none of them are perfect.

## 50 No. 7 Aztecs clobber Occidental, as expected

By Tom Sheridan | North County Times  
January 1, 2010

Midway through the second half of San Diego State's demolition of Occidental College at Viejas Arena on Friday afternoon, the student section started to chant "double your score." San Diego State, undefeated and ranked No. 7 in the nation, appeared to have double the size and double the talent, too.

Four Aztecs reached double-figures in points and all 10 players who got into the game played at least 14 minutes in the 93-50 victory.

Such a mismatch is to be expected when one of seven NCAA Division I unbeaten teams faces a Division III school whose tallest player is 6-foot-6 and whose resume of victories includes American Sports University, West Coast Baptist and Pacifica.

The Aztecs (15-0) were so dominant that in the second half that they made 21-of-24 shots from the floor and produced runs of 11 and 13 unanswered points. With Kawhi Leonard (10 rebounds) and Malcolm Thomas (nine) leading the way, the Aztecs outrebounded Occidental 42-13.

"This was good for camaraderie," San Diego State coach Steve Fisher said. "This was good for (Players) 8 through 12. This was good for our team."

Chase Tapley and Torrey Pines High graduate James Rahon led San Diego State with 15 points apiece. Rahon came off the bench to equal his career high in points, nailing 3-pointers on consecutive possessions in the second half, first from the left corner and then from the right.

"Rahon went to the Torrey Pines tournament and had everybody in there tell him how great he was," Fisher said. "And that helped his confidence. He's a scorer. He should never, ever be hesitant to shoot an open shot. He's too good a shooter."

Rahon was 5-for-8, all from beyond the 3-point arc, as he bounced back from a tough time in Las Vegas last week. Rahon went 0-for-7 from the floor in two tournament games last week, though the Aztecs won both games.

"I wasn't considering it a slump," Rahon said, "I just wasn't making them. Every shot I take I think is going to go in. I just have to focus on the next one, not think about the last shot."

Starting forward Billy White missed the game with a sprained ankle, but Fisher expects he'll be ready to play in San Diego State's Mountain West Conference opener Wednesday at Texas Christian.

Deshun McCoy led Occidental (5-4) with 18 points.

The crowd of 12,414 gave the Aztecs their fifth sellout of the season.

"They appreciate effort and team work," Fisher said of the fans, "and everybody likes to see some spectacular play. And we have the ability to give a few of those in the course of a 40-minute game."

## 51 Aztecs enjoying unprecedented success, support under Fisher

By Brian Hiro | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 5, 2011

He called himself the ticket man. He would roam the San Diego State campus with his pockets stuffed with ducats, free for any student or university employee he could entice to attend an Aztecs men's basketball game.

The ticket man didn't find many takers, even though he was a nationally recognized coach with a national championship on his resume.

"Angie, my wife, counted the fans our first couple games. You could count them," Steve Fisher recalled last month of his debut season at San Diego State. "It was, at best, apathy. No expectations. Come if there's nothing else to do."

That was the state of Aztecs basketball when Fisher, the former Michigan coach, arrived in San Diego in 1999.

This is the state of Aztecs basketball now: On New Year's Eve, a day when -- in years past -- San Diego State fans would be doing anything but trekking to Viejas Arena, a sellout crowd of 12,414 turned out for a game against Occidental, a Division III school. The student section stationed behind one of the baskets was stuffed to the gills, as usual, and exactly 12 minutes before tipoff, they commenced their usual chant -- "I believe that we will win!" repeated again and again under the direction of two yell leaders as 3,000 maniacs hop up and down, rocking the bleachers.

Then the Aztecs did their part, manhandling their physically overmatched foe in their largest margin of victory (43 points) since 2001 to improve to 15-0 heading into Wednesday's Mountain West Conference opener at Texas Christian.

If that unprecedented flawless record doesn't sufficiently wow you, wrap your head around this: San Diego State, now ranked an astounding No. 6 in the Associated Press poll, owns the country's second-longest winning streak, behind defending national champion Duke (22).

"The man orchestrating the seismic shift is a 65-year-old from rural Illinois who never imagined that he would leave the Midwest, much less end up in Southern California -- and much less construct a second act that could ultimately eclipse his tenure at Michigan, where he won a national crown as an interim coach in 1989 and later directed the famous Fab Five to consecutive title game appearances in the early 1990s. "

- Brian Hiro (*North County Times* - "Aztecs enjoying unprecedented success, support under Fisher")

What in the name of Mike Krzyzewski is going on at Montezuma Mesa?

"There's definitely something different in the air," senior point guard D.J. Gay said. "You can feel it."

You'd have to be numb not to. In recent years, the Aztecs have made multiple dents in the wall separating them from nationwide mid-major credibility -- after all, they have won at least 20 games and played in a postseason tournament each of the last five seasons. But this season, which still isn't halfway old, they're on the verge of toppling the wall, if they haven't already.

Consider that San Diego State is one more good week from possibly cracking the top five after never having been ranked before this year. Consider that the Aztecs have sold out five of their seven home games after achieving that distinction only eight previous times in the 13-year history of their arena. Consider that fans now must actually plan ahead if they want to go to games (dates against Nevada-Las Vegas on Jan. 12 and Brigham Young on Feb. 26 have already sold out).

"For one game, I saw a guy holding a sign saying, 'I need tickets,' " said Edward Lewis, a senior who's the sports editor of *The Daily Aztec*, the school newspaper. "It's a complete culture change, and it's awesome to see."

The man orchestrating the seismic shift is a 65-year-old from rural Illinois who never imagined that he would leave the Midwest, much less end up in Southern



California -- and much less construct a second act that could ultimately eclipse his tenure at Michigan, where he won a national crown as an interim coach in 1989 and later directed the famous Fab Five to consecutive title game appearances in the early 1990s.

But Fisher was fired in 1997 in the wake of an NCAA investigation into illegal payments to players -- he was later cleared of wrongdoing -- and after a year out of coaching, he found himself across the country as an assistant with the Sacramento Kings. His NBA work was impressive enough to merit a contract extension offer, and he was prepared to accept it until he was approached by then-San Diego State athletic director Rick Bay, with whom he shared Michigan ties.

Bay dangled an unusually secure seven-year deal, which Fisher found impossible to turn down.

"It was Rick who said, 'I think we might be able to get Steve Fisher out here,' " San Diego State president Stephen Weber said. "When Steve and Rick walked into my office for that interview, this was a recognizable guy, a guy who was also understood to be one of the best coaches in the country. And, of course, he walked into a virtually nonexistent basketball program."

Indeed, it was a good thing that Fisher procured a lengthy contract because this was far from a quick fix. The Aztecs had enjoyed only one winning season in the previous 14 years, and Fisher inherited a team that had limped to a miserable 4-22 record the season before.

With the school moving into the new, more difficult Mountain West Conference, Year 1 was bound to be a struggle. It proved to be worse than that, with Fisher's first team bottoming out at 5-23, and 0-14 in the conference.

"I was not naive enough to think that I was going to come in here and we were going to win the league," Fisher said. "I thought we would be better than we were, but I knew that our future was in somebody else's gym."

Fisher's first recruiting class -- along with Tony Bland, a heralded transfer from Syracuse -- keyed a turnaround that saw San Diego State surprisingly make the NCAA tournament by his third season. But the success proved fleeting, as the Aztecs posted two losing marks and failed to reach the postseason in any of the next three years -- serving as a reminder of the challenge of building up a tradition-less program.

"What Coach says is very true: The step from going from bad to pretty good is the easiest step," said Mark Fisher, Steve's son and a fourth-year San Diego State assistant, who dutifully calls his father "Coach" in basketball settings. "The challenge was to go from pretty good to really good, and that's elusive for anybody in any program, especially one without much tradition."

Yet Steve Fisher has pulled it off, turning 2002's flash in the pan into a program that expects to contend for the MWC title and be picked for the Big Dance every year. As the record and ranking would indicate, the current group is clearly shaping up as his best team. It features four seniors who were integral parts of last season's NCAA tournament squad (Gay, Malcolm Thomas, Billy White and Brian Carlwell), a sharp-shooting transfer from Santa Clara in Torrey Pines High product James Rahon, and the ringleader, bruising sophomore forward Kawhi Leonard, a recruiting coup out of Riverside.

The Aztecs would have to fall apart in conference play not to make consecutive NCAA tournaments for the first time under Fisher -- and garner an unparalleled high seed, at that -- but simply experiencing March Madness isn't enough for the program anymore.

"We want to win a game in the NCAA tournament, which we've never done. That's the next step," Fisher said. "We have an opportunity to have a special season, but there are a lot of teams that can say that right now. Where it goes from here, I don't know. I'm not going to look too far ahead. I'm going to enjoy where we are and what we're doing."

Besides good coaching and talent, a major asset in the Aztecs' ascension has been the increasing strength of their home-court advantage. They have lost only two games at Viejas since early in the 2008-09 season -- both to rival BYU -- thanks in large part to a raucous atmosphere that now rivals almost any arena in the West.

And the loudness of the student section is matched by its creativity. Calling themselves "The Show" (the nickname is a winking nod to a message board post, in which a fan derided the kids for thinking they're the "whole show"), the students come dressed like anything from Mormon missionaries (for BYU games, of

course) to a giant banana to a gecko to Santa Claus. They create and hold up giant heads made of posterboard to distract free-throw shooters, with recent examples featuring the likenesses of Justin Bieber, Bill Cosby, Borat and Miley Cyrus. They chant boisterously and jeer mercilessly.

"The Show" even has its own website, where students can congregate to plan for the next game and to trade ideas on how best to taunt opposing players.

"It's all in good fun, and it's all about giving the Aztecs the best chance of winning," said Trevor Bishop, a December graduate of San Diego State who has worked his way up to the front row of "The Show." "We want to be known as the anti-Cameron Crazies (referring to Duke's famous student section). Everyone's unique. Everyone brings something to the table."

Surveying the scene from the bench, Fisher can't help but smile sometimes. Healthy again after undergoing surgery for prostate cancer in 2008, he relishes coaching more than he ever has. Though he'll be 66 in March, he says retirement isn't even on his radar screen.

"I'm old enough to be able to appreciate where I am and what's going on," he said. "I'm not worried about getting fired or finding another job for more money. I love where I am and I appreciate everything that's happened here."

Fisher is no longer the ticket man. At San Diego State, the program he built from nothing, he's now just the Man.

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### Aztecs take time, then blitz TCU in MWC opener

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune

January 6, 2011

Steve Fisher is not big on calling timeout in the first half, preferring to let his players work out their problems themselves, not wanting to show weakness, not wanting to cry uncle.

But with 4:39 left in the first half Wednesday and his team down six points to Texas Christian at Daniel-Meyer Coliseum and his assistant coaches urging him to do it, San Diego State's head coach reluctantly signaled to the referees for a break in the action.

He gathered his players around him and offered them a choice: "You can either be 1-0 in conference, or be 0-1 and in last place."

No Xs and Os. No red marker squeaking across the grease board. No tactical adjustments.

And none needed. The nation's No. 6 college basketball team played like the nation's No. 6 college basketball team after that, a size 17 shoe swishing the Horned Frogs, a more-lopsided-than-it-looks 66-53 victory in the Mountain West Conference opener for both teams.

That 25-19 deficit late in the first half?

Six minutes into the second half it was 49-31, SDSU.

"When Coach said that, I think it gave everybody the energy they needed," said Malcolm Thomas, who had 18 points (on 8-of-10 shooting) and 10 rebounds. "Last place ... I don't like those words."

Added Kawhi Leonard: "We started playing hard."

It was vintage Aztecs, lulling an opponent into a false sense of security and confidence (and perhaps overconfidence), dangling a carrot in front of a team famished for a signature win and then cruelly yanking it away.

They closed the half with a 10-1 run, then opened the second half with a 20-5 furnace blast that had TCU coach Jim Christian trying anything, everything, something to stop them. One timeout. Another timeout. Another timeout. Mass substitutions. A full-court press. A 1-1-3 zone. Half-court man-to-man.

Nothing worked.

"If you allow them to get open-floor turnovers, you're in trouble," Christian said, "and that's exactly what happened."

SDSU (16-0) scored 20 points in less than five minutes. A short bank shot by

Leonard. A three-point play by Thomas. A block by Billy White, violently slapping the ball off the backboard to near midcourt .... followed by a Thomas dunk at the other end.

Another Thomas dunk.

A sick lob from Chase Tapley to Leonard for another rim-bending dunk.

A jumper by Leonard.

Another Thomas three-point play.

A Leonard steal and breakaway dunk.

Another Leonard steal and Tapley breakaway dunk.

"It's exhilarating, it's a rush when we get going like that," backup center Brian Carlwell said. "You feel like you've got them, like they're at your mercy. We feed off that. We thrive off that."

The Aztecs had no steals in the first half, then had eight in the second half.

They had four turnovers in the opening eight minutes of the game, then went nearly 24 minutes without one.

They had another dreadful perimeter shooting night (4-of-22 on threes) and attempted only six free throws, but finished with nine dunks and would have had a 10th had White's tomahawk throw-down not rolled out.

The bottom line: You can get away with that against TCU on a Wednesday night in January. You're probably not getting away with that at BYU or UNLV or New Mexico, or in the NCAA Tournament.

"If we want to get to where we want to go," Thomas said, "we can't keep playing one half."

This lethargic start was a function of two fouls by Leonard in the opening 79 seconds, seven first-half offensive rebounds by 6-foot-5 TCU guard J.R. Cadot, the frustration from missing wide-open threes, and an atmosphere that rivaled the library during finals week (the stat-sheet attendance of 4,287 apparently included 17 NBA scouts and about 4,000 empty purple seats).

With 4:39 left, Fisher had seen enough. He winced, stuffed his pride firmly in his pocket and called timeout.

"I really thought we were exhausted physically and mentally," Fisher said. "We were spent. They ran us off the floor. We were on our heels. We were a bit discombobulated."

Had the poor Horned Frogs just where they wanted 'em.

#### Notes

The Aztecs will practice in Fort Worth on Thursday before flying to Salt Lake City, where they play Utah on Saturday afternoon ... SDSU has won four straight conference openers and eight of the last nine. It also has won five straight against TCU and 10 of the last 11 ... One of the game's biggest keys was Carlwell's six points and five rebounds in a mere six first-half minutes to steady the listing ship. Another key: back-to-back threes by James Rahon ...

Despite spending most of the first half on the bench in foul trouble, Leonard still finished with his 27th career double-double (14 points, 11 rebounds), putting him third in school history behind Michael Cage and Marcus Slaughter ... Point guard D.J. Gay had another superb defensive game, holding TCU leading scorer Ronnie Moss to 11 points on 5-of-15 shooting (1-of-7 on threes). Gay played all 40 minutes, meaning he has sat out a total of 13 minutes in this season's five road games ... SDSU also had the Horned Frogs' numerous half-court sets well-scouted, allowing just 24 points in the paint ... Another good assist-to-turnover night: 17 and nine.

#### Aztecs save their best for the second half

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 7, 2011

After opening the second half against Texas Christian with a 20-5 run that transformed a tight, tense game into a smiling, high-fiving dunkfest, San Diego State forward Malcolm Thomas was asked if he were ever worried his team wouldn't conjure the magic once again.

"After opening the second half against Texas Christian with a 20-5 run that transformed a tight, tense game into a smiling, high-fiving dunkfest, San Diego State forward Malcolm Thomas was asked if he were ever worried his team wouldn't conjure the magic once again. He laughed. 'I don't want to say I expected it,' [Kawhi Leonard] said. 'But I kind of expected it.'"

- Mark Ziegler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs save their best for the second half")

He laughed.

"I don't want to say I expected it," he said. "But I kind of expected it."

Why wouldn't he? The Aztecs have been doing it all season. Fluke has become trend has become habit.

One thing you should know about this team: Get your halftime hot dog and Coke quickly, then get back to your seat. You don't want to miss what happens next.

And it happens almost like clockwork, the ferocious second-half surge that renders perfectly capable college basketball teams helpless against the shackles of momentum and is a key reason – perhaps the reason – the Aztecs are 16-0 and ranked sixth in both major polls. This is a team with a serious case of the runs.

Seventeen times this season, they have produced runs of 10-0 or greater. Fourteen have come in the second half.

SDSU is averaging 34.9 points in the first half, 39.4 points in the second half.

It is shooting 46.8 percent in the first half, 54.6 percent in the second half.

Shooting 28.6 percent behind the three-point arc in the first half, 38.3 percent in the second half.

A plus-2.2 rebound margin in the first half, plus-3.8 in the second half.

It can be frustrating, certainly, being in close games against inferior opponents in the first half, even trailing. There was the 22-point deficit to Wisconsin-Green Bay, the seven-point deficit against IUPUI, the 11 points against Miami (Ohio), the seven points against USD, the six against TCU on Wednesday night.

But this is an athletic, fit team. And it is a veteran team, full of fifth-year seniors and fourth-year juniors, with a combined 358 career starts in Division I among SDSU's first unit.

"And that's important," Coach Steve Fisher said. "We have a mindset that we don't look up at the scoreboard and panic. We say, 'We've been here before. We'll see a crack and we'll take advantage of it.' We do have the ability when we do smell blood, when we see that crack, to burst through. To pounce."

It is what has come to define this team, the back-to-back-to-back steals followed by the back-to-back-to-back dunks, the game going so fast that opposing coaches can't call timeout or get subs to the scorer's table fast enough, their heads spinning, their minds blowing.

It is a point of emphasis for Fisher, who has been around long enough to know the value both on your team's psyche and your opponent's. He isn't a big stat guy, but he does have someone charting runs on the bench during games. And when he posts his "Keys to the Game" in the locker room beforehand, he regularly scribbles out: "3 runs of 8-0 or more."

Wichita State knows. A month ago they were leading by a point at Viejas Arena five minutes into the second half. Seventy-one seconds later, they were down by 13.

Fourteen points. Seventy-one seconds.

"Wow," Wichita State coach Gregg Marshall said afterward. "They got around us, they went over us, they were quicker, faster, longer."

The runs can come at various times during the second half, but the biggest dan-

ger zone for opposing teams is four or five minutes after halftime, about when their starters begin to tire. The Aztecs are just getting warmed up. Fisher uses his bench liberally in the first half, often finishing it with three or four members of the second unit, keeping his starters fresh for what is to come later.

Opposing coaches are left with a choice: Play their reserves against SDSU's talented first unit, or keep their exhausted starters in. Hemlock, or arsenic.

The statistics show an increase in offensive and defensive efficiency from one half to the next, but the numbers spike between four and eight minutes into the second half. The Aztecs have outscored teams by a combined 53 points over that stretch this season, shooting 55 percent to their opponent's 35.7 percent, committing 21 turnovers and forcing 34.

Wednesday in Fort Worth, they had steals on five consecutive TCU possessions that resulted in 12 points in a mere 2:26.

"It feels good," said Kawhi Leonard, who had two of the steals and two of the dunks, "because we're not having to run any (halfcourt) offense to get our points. It's like a layup line out there."

#### NOTES

D.J. Gay came up lame in the first drill and sat out the remainder of Thursday's practice with a calf injury he apparently sustained against TCU. "I'm a little bit concerned," Fisher said of Gay, who played all 40 minutes Wednesday night. "He never misses anything. He said somebody fell on his calf and it's hurting him now." Gay, a senior, has played in all 118 games since arriving at SDSU ... The Aztecs flew to Salt Lake City Thursday night, will practice there Friday and play Utah on Saturday at 1 p.m. PST ... Leonard made the cut for the Wooden Award from the preseason top 50 list to the midseason 30-player list.

#### 54

### SDSU's Iron Man: Gay insists he'll play against Utah

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 8, 2011

San Diego State point guard D.J. Gay has played in all 119 basketball games since he set foot on campus four years ago, and he admits there is one way he won't play Saturday afternoon against Utah or in any other game for the remainder of his career.

"If I'm not alive," he said.

That bruised left calf that kept him out of practice the past two days and has put serious creases into Coach Steve Fisher's brow?

"I'll be out there," Gay said.

It is just another item in an ever-growing list of tangibles and intangibles that make Gay arguably the most indispensable player on a 16-0 Aztecs team ranked sixth nationally. He runs the offense, guards the other team's best perimeter player, takes the clutch shots, steps up to the line for late-game free throws. But it's his unwavering consistency that makes him special.

He's just always out there.

He averaged a team-high 34.6 minutes last season and played 278 of a possible 280 minutes in the final seven games. He opened Mountain West Conference play Wednesday by going the full 40 in a 66-53 win at TCU, the ninth time this season he's played 35-plus minutes. In the Aztecs' five true road games, he has been on the floor 192 of a possible 200 minutes.

Practices? Rarely misses them, either.

"He never takes a day off," Fisher says. "You have to make sure you manage how long he's on the court (practicing) because he won't come off himself. His stock line is, 'I'm OK. I'm fine.'"

The current calf injury occurred, Gay said, when he dove for a loose ball in the second half and a TCU player fell on his leg. He calls it a "bruise," but it was painful enough that he could barely walk Thursday and was only slightly more mobile Friday.

Fisher insists the injury and Gay's heavy minutes are not related, but he does concede the coaching staff has been cognizant about resting him more in practice this season.

"I get angry at myself if I have to miss a day of practice," said Gay, who has 99 career starts. "I lie to the trainers just to get out there and practice, but this time it didn't work ... People think that playing 40 minutes is hard and everything, but every four minutes you get a (media) timeout, and you catch a break during free throws.

"I prepared my body in the offseason to play 40 minutes if that's what coach wants me to do."

On paper, Utah (7-8, 0-1) does not appear to present much of a challenge, having lost five straight games — among them the lone Division I victory by USD this season and just the second conference win by Air Force in two-plus years. Coach Jim Boylen missed Wednesday's 77-69 loss at Air Force while tending to an undisclosed "family illness."

But the Utes can be dangerous. Teams have had success zoning them (USD did for the entire game) because of their erratic three-point shooting, but the Aztecs don't play zone. Against man-to-man defenses, the Utes are among the conference's most capable teams at dribble penetration and drawing fouls, shooting 45 free throws in a 90-75 win against Weber State.

The Aztecs also are making their first trip this season into altitude, where burning lungs often lead to players resting on defense and not moving their feet against dribble drives. And the aging Huntsman Center has never been kind to them; last year's 70-68 win improved their all-time record there to 3-29.

"By no means is this an easy game," Fisher said.

#### 55

### Aztecs rebound in second half, put away Utah

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 9, 2011

Longtime San Diego State assistant head coach Brian Dutcher was talking about his team's 71-62 victory on a snowy Saturday afternoon against a Utah team that has now lost six straight.

About his team's 10 first-half turnovers, most of which were unforced. About the poor free-throw shooting (again). About the missed dunk that killed their momentum in a key stretch. About the inability to stop Utah's dribble penetration. About the one-point halftime deficit.

Then he stopped and smiled, and turned philosophical.

"It was a win," he said, "and I've never had a bad win."

It wasn't exactly a Rembrandt or a Picasso, but it showed why the Aztecs are 17-0 overall, won their first two Mountain West Conference games on the road and should maintain their No. 6 ranking when the new polls are released Monday. The stars produced — a combined 37 points and 23 rebounds from Malcolm Thomas and Kawhi Leonard — and so did the guys who operate in their prodigious shadows.

D.J. Gay, playing 37 minutes in altitude on a badly bruised calf that would have sidelined most people, had 15 of his 18 points in the second half on 4-of-6 three-point shooting (and a layup) and no turnovers for the first 39½ minutes of the game. And Tim Shelton came off the bench to draw an unheard-of four offensive fouls against the Utes (7-9, 0-2 in MWC).

Just as thunderous slam dunks are often worth more than two points for the momentum and energy they create, drawing charges — standing still while an opponent plows into you and unceremoniously splatters your body onto the hardwood — are their defensive equivalent.

"It's a major swing," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "It's a turnover. It's taking away a basket from the other team. It's taking away momentum from the other team and slipping it back to you. I tell the guys, 'When a guy takes a charge, you've got to run over there like you've just won the lottery and pick him up.'"

Added Gay: "That's something that doesn't go on the stat line, but it definitely should. Tim's an important player for us. He prides himself on taking charges. That's something he does to get under the opponent's skin. Definitely an energy boost for us."

Also not on the stat sheet is a category for clutch shots, or for clutch shots taken after a dreadful first half.

Gay in the first half: 1-of-5 from the field, 0-of-4 on threes, 1-of-4 from line.

Gay in the second half: Calmly draining a pair of three-pointers just eight seconds apart as the Aztecs turned a one-point deficit into a seven-point lead.

Utah closed to one again. Gay made a three, a two and a three on consecutive possessions as the Aztecs expanded the lead to 11 with 5:42 left.

"Whatever we need at the time, D.J. comes in and steps up," Leonard said. "A steal, a basket, a rebound, a pass, whatever we need, he does it."

The win improved the Aztecs' all-time record at the Huntsman Center to 4-29 and was their biggest margin at the circular arena with red seats. It also marked the first time in school history they have defeated Utah in three consecutive meetings.

They had to work for it, though.

"I thought it was going to be a close game," said Utah junior Will Clyburn, who had 17 points and 10 rebounds. "It is encouraging that we stuck with them for that long."

The Aztecs trailed 34-33 at the half after committing 10 turnovers against a team that does not pressure much defensively and on average forces only 11.7 per game. Players were stepping out of bounds (twice) or traveling (four times) or throwing lazy passes or having the ball stripped from them trying to dribble in the paint.

There also was the issue of SDSU's first altitude game of the season (Utah is about 4,300 feet). Leonard, who usually never wants to sub out, asked out of the game three times because, Fisher said, "he couldn't breathe."

That prevented the usually spry Aztecs from pressing full-court for long stretches and unleashing their vaunted transition game for easy baskets. And Gay's calf injury and lower back pain suffered by fellow guard Chase Tapley allowed Utah's Josh Watkins (24 points) to continually penetrate off the dribble and, as Fisher said, "create a lot misery for us."

SDSU's Thomas was more succinct in his analysis of the first half: "Ugly."

But just as they have done all season, the second half was a different team and a different story. Until Gay lost the ball with 21 seconds left while running out the clock, the Aztecs had zero turnovers in the second half.

Fisher was asked if this was an unnecessarily tough win.

"They're all tough," said Fisher, whose team hosts UNLV on Wednesday at an already sold out Viejas Arena. "You have to play well enough to win, and we've done that so far this season. We will be looking forward to getting on the plane and getting home and enjoying being 17-0."

"It's always easier to get ready for the next game when you win."

#### Notes

The announced crowd of 8,571 was the largest of the season — for men's basketball. Utah's upset of No. 1 UCLA in women's gymnastics the night before drew 12,445 ... Utah coach Jim Boylen was back on the bench after missing last Wednesday's loss at Air Force due to an undisclosed "family illness" ...

The final, ugly free-throw numbers: 8-of-18, or 44.4 percent. The Aztecs almost shot better (43.8 percent) when they were guarded ... James Rahon wore No. 33 on Saturday instead of his usual No. 11 ... It was SDSU's 26th straight win against unranked opponents ... Gay made his 100th career start and Fisher recorded his 399th career win ... It was the Utes' first home game since Dec. 17, and they haven't won since.

#### 56

#### SDSU basketball's secret formula: length, not strength

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 12, 2011

If there is a singular moment that defines San Diego State's basketball season, if

there is one film clip that causes opposing coaches to press rewind and then drop the remote, it came 2½ minutes into the second half at Texas Christian last week.

TCU had just executed a perfectly-timed fast break and found guard Ronnie Moss alone for an uncontested layup that would trim the Aztecs lead to three.

Or so he thought. SDSU's Billy White flew in from behind — "he had to set a world record for the 40-yard dash as to how quickly he caught him," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said — and smacked Moss's shot off the backboard so hard, so ferociously, that the thud echoed through Daniel-Meyer Coliseum and the ball nearly sailed to halfcourt.

White turned and sprinted in the opposite direction, ultimately feeding a streaking Malcolm Thomas for a thunderous dunk that ignited a 15-0 Aztecs run and put away the game.

The most impressive part: White and Thomas are forwards. Post players. Inside guys. Bigs.

Thick, lumbering, gravity-bound behemoths, they're not.

**"It's easy to argue that they're the most active, agile big guys in the country,' UNLV coach Lon Kruger said. 'I don't know of anyone who has more athletic ability, more agility, more activity than San Diego State has.'"**

- Mark Ziegler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "SDSU basketball's secret formula: length, not strength")

It is what separates the No. 6 Aztecs from good or even very good teams, a disparity in athleticism that was readily apparent last season against UNLV and they hope will be again tonight at 7 at soldout Viejas Arena. Every team has bigs. Every team has 6-8s and 6-9s on the roster. But not everyone exudes the new basketball mantra quite like the Aztecs:

Length, not strength.

Thomas, White and Kawhi Leonard all have lightning first steps. They're all high fliers. They're all quick jumpers. And they all have loooooong arms.

"It's easy to argue that they're the most active, agile big guys in the country," UNLV coach Lon Kruger said. "I don't know of anyone who has more athletic ability, more agility, more activity than San Diego State has."

Or here's how Colorado State coach Tim Miles put it after watching the second half of the TCU game: "That front line is unbelievable. They make college teams look like intramural teams."

A decade or two ago, the formula in college basketball was to find a 300-pound aircraft carrier, a space-eater to clog the lane on defense and park in the low post on offense. But with the advent of the three-point line and five-out perimeter offenses, the market for mobile posts has spiked.

Fisher and SDSU have been ahead of the trend. Aerick Sanders, Marcus Slaughter, Jerome Habel, Lorenzo Wade, Randy Holcomb, Mohamed Abukar, Thomas, White — all long, lean big men.

Both SDSU recruits for next season, transfers DeShawn Stephens and Kevin Young, fit the mold as well. Stephens is 6-9, 210 pounds. Young is 6-8, 195.

"Sometimes the high-profile programs think they need strength more than anything," Aztecs assistant head coach Brian Dutcher said. "But if you've got basketball ability and you're long and athletic, you can counter strength. We take a kid who maybe is not as strong but who is athletic, and then we try to go around the big guy."

On the offensive end, SDSU's forwards often catch the ball, then turn and face their defenders so they can take them off the dribble — instead of the traditional, back-to-the-basket post moves. They also are so active, so explosive off their feet, that blocking them out is akin to herding cats — hence, SDSU's ability to destroy teams on the offensive boards.

Defensively, they block shots. If they don't block them, they change the arc on them. Or they deter them from being taken at all.

UNLV may understand that better than anyone else. The Rebels have consistently had NCAA tournament-caliber teams in recent years with exceptional backcourts, yet SDSU has won five of the last six meetings and 10 of the last 14. They played three times last season; the Rebels shot 40.3, 35.2 and 32.7 percent.

And the Aztecs have outrebounded UNLV in six straight games by a combined 230-176, or nine per game. Leonard averaged 15 rebounds in their three games last season, including 21 in the Mountain West Conference tournament final in Las Vegas.

Miles and Colorado State won their conference opener last week, then sat down to watch everyone else play the next night on TV. He flipped to the SDSU game at the start of the second half.

Two minutes later, White was chasing down TCU's Moss. Even in slow motion, it looked fast.

"You can run a perfect play," Miles sighed. "You can have a perfect cut and deliver a pass and be going in for a layup and, bang, it goes off the backboard and, whoop, they're out to half court. Now you've got problems.

"You just ran the offense as well as you can run it, and it turns into a fast break for them."

57

### Fisher turns bad hand into full houses

By Ed Graney | Las Vegas Review-Journal  
January 12, 2011

There was a time when they counted attendance at San Diego State basketball games by the wristwatch. Seriously. I remember when a reporter on deadline inquired about how many fans were at a particular game and a university official asked what time it was. He was told 9:23 p.m.

Announced attendance later that evening: 923.

There was a time when the biggest story involving the Aztecs was a downtown news conference held by a player who was threatening a lawsuit if his scholarship wasn't renewed due to his claim the program was discriminating against him based on his medical condition of lupus.

What a wacky afternoon. There were charts and diagrams and everything. It was a scene.

It's true in college basketball. You can go from terrible to decent and from decent to good quickly. You can, with a special high school recruit here and a key transfer or two there, rise from the dead in a season or two.

It's the next step -- going from good to great, from competitive to nationally ranked -- that is far more difficult to make.

It's the difference between climbing Mount Charleston or Mount Everest, between landing a date with the shy librarian or the supermodel.

It's a grind many never complete, a reality many never realize.

What you have then with San Diego State the last decade or so is one of the most impressive turnarounds in college basketball history, a program that in Steve Fisher's first season as coach won five games and went 0-14 in conference to one that enters tonight's home game against UNLV at 17-0 and ranked sixth.

One that went from offering a starting lineup some intramural teams would have competed with (or beat) back in 1999 to what Rebels coach Lon Kruger this week described as "the most active, agile big guys inside in the country."

When you know you have arrived: San Diego State on New Year's Eve afternoon sold out Viejas Arena for a game against Division III Occidental.

Tonight will be the season's sixth sellout in the 12,414-seat venue. Prior to this year, San Diego State sold out just eight games in the arena's history.

This is what happens when you mix consistency in a coaching staff with convincing enough good players to believe in a dream that owns few reference points.

Fisher spent his first few seasons selling the past with a national championship ring from Michigan and stories of the Fab Five. He hasn't had to sell that in a long, long time.

The Aztecs still have yet to win a game in the NCAA Tournament and yet the team UNLV encounters here is the best to ever compete for the school.

But the line (Aztecs -5½) is a curious one and speaks to the theory that UNLV will have every chance to win if it makes shots, if it can combat San Diego State's rebounding and athletic edge by shooting well on 3s and pressuring enough defensively.

"San Diego State is playing great," Kruger said. "They deserve every bit of their ranking and attention. It's great for our league."

It's interesting Kruger mentions the Mountain West because when you envision the coming seasons for basketball -- the likes of Utah and Brigham Young gone and Fresno State, UNR and Boise State arriving -- you would think the Rebels and Aztecs have every chance along with New Mexico to sit atop the standings annually.

Kruger inherited at UNLV a lifetime's worth more tradition and history in basketball than Fisher did at San Diego State, but each has built winning programs by opening their doors to high major transfers searching for new beginnings.

"What you have then with San Diego State the last decade or so is one of the most impressive turnarounds in college basketball history, a program that in Steve Fisher's first season as coach won five games and went 0-14 in conference to one that enters tonight's home game against UNLV at 17-0 and ranked sixth."

- Ed Graney (*Las Vegas Review-Journal* - "Fisher turns bad hand into full houses")

It's a risk-reward strategy that has more times than not paid off for both. The hard part is sustaining success once you reach a level where fans not only expect you to make the NCAAs each March, but win and advance once there.

This is the challenge facing a San Diego State team that tonight will start three seniors and a sophomore in Kawhi Leonard who is destined for the first round of an NBA Draft -- that once the supermodel agrees to a date, how do you land a second and third and so on?

Undeclared records and Top 10 rankings are nice, but a program's legacy is born in the days and weeks following Selection Sunday. In this, San Diego State still has miles to travel. It hasn't done anything on the sport's biggest stage.

But there is no denying the growth, the journey to legitimacy, the transformation from terrible to decent to good to great.

"We like the fact that we're unbeaten," Fisher said. "We like the fact that we're ranked. But we can't let it obsess all our thoughts. We've embraced it, and I do believe our kids have embraced it the right way."

They are not looking at wristwatches to determine attendance figures. The days of lupus news conferences are over. They sold out a game against Division III Occidental.

An amazing turnaround, for sure.

58

### Aztecs win backyard brawl against UNLV

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 13, 2011

It was after the Occidental game, a 43-point romp against a Division III opponent on a lazy New Year's Eve afternoon, when the conversation turned to the start of Mountain West Conference play.

San Diego State forward Malcolm Thomas was asked what to expect.

"A war," he said quietly. "It's going to be a war and we have to bring it."

Consider it brought.

The No. 6 Aztecs beat -- or was it beat up? -- UNLV 55-49 at towel-waving, roof-shaking Viejas Arena on Wednesday night and now own the nation's longest win streak at 18 games following No. 1 Duke's loss at Florida State. And they have the bruises to show for it.

"Some people think we're still a joke," SDSU forward Billy White said. "We hear comments all the time (that) we shouldn't be in the Top 10, we shouldn't be ranked. That just motivates us more, keeps us playing harder, keeps making us

prove them wrong. We know that we belong here. We're not going anywhere."

The Aztecs (18-0, 3-0) have run past teams this season, they've swerved around them, they've jumped over them. But this was a different dimension, a different side to what some consider a finesse outfit. A mean, tough, nasty side.

This was not a free-flowing, rhythmic game of fast breaks and gently lofted shots making the nylon dance. It was bruising screens, arm bars in the small of the back, grind-it-out halfcourt sets, referees separating players after hard fouls (three times), technical fouls (six), and something resembling MMA under the boards every time a shot went up.

It was the Big East in the Mountain West.

"It's a fight every time we play them," said UNLV guard Tre'Von Willis, who was relentlessly taunted by the SDSU student section for his alleged assault charges over the summer.

"It was not for the weak and faint of heart," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said.

The Aztecs didn't make a perimeter jumper until the game was six minutes old and had only two the entire first half (in 15 attempts). But this game was being waged closer to the basket, in the paint, and the Aztecs were able to compensate for any shooting deficiencies with their usual dominance on the glass against the smaller Rebels.

They entered the night having outrebounded UNLV in each of their last six meetings by an average of nine per game, and by late in the first half they held a 20-11 advantage. Kawhi Leonard finished with 17 rebounds and Thomas had 16 – the first time in SDSU history two players had 15-plus rebounds in the same game.

Seventeen plus 16 is 33.

UNLV's total rebounds: 31.

It also helped that the Rebels (13-4, 1-2) couldn't shoot from the perimeter, either. The Rebels held the nation's longest streak of making at least one three-pointer (all 788 games since the line was instituted in 1986), and it was in jeopardy of ending until Willis drained one with 9:35 left.

The Aztecs finally heated up behind the arc, making three of their first five attempts of the second half – two by Billy White and another by James Rahon after a nifty shot fake.

That gave them a 44-32 lead, the game's only double-digit margin, and UNLV was playing catch-up the rest of the night. The Rebels closed to five points with five minutes left and had several chances to trim the deficit further, but they had two turnovers and missed four shots in their next seven possessions.

"We got some open looks," Willis said. "If I would have hit one there down the stretch it would have cut it to two with still a couple minutes left. We've just got to make some shots."

UNLV did manage to get it to 53-49 with 1:05 left and called timeout. Then the Aztecs maturely ran the shot clock down to five seconds before Leonard drew a foul and made both free throws.

The Rebels no doubt will rue their three-point shooting (in)accuracy: 1-of-18, or 5.6 percent. The 49 points were their fewest of the season, by 13.

"You've got to make shots," said UNLV coach Lon Kruger, who team had no one with more than Anthony Marshall's 11 points. "When you make shots, it changes the complexion of everything."

The night's only piece of bad news for the Aztecs was that Cal transfer Gary Franklin Jr. did not attend the game, as his father had said they planned. Instead, the 6-foot-2 freshman guard reportedly will transfer to Baylor.

Franklin Jr. originally considered Baylor before choosing Cal as a star guard out of Mater Dei High in Santa Ana, where he was rated the nation's No. 78 overall recruit. He left Cal after 13 games, 11 of which he started, and his father ranked SDSU among the finalists for his new home.

Why the rush to commit to Baylor?

Because Baylor started classes on Monday and Franklin Jr. needed to be enrolled

for the spring semester at his new school if he hoped to be eligible at the semester break next December. Gary Franklin Sr. said Baylor had given his son a Friday deadline.

#### NOTES

Fisher won his 400th career game ... Duke's loss means there just four undefeated teams left in the nation: SDSU, No. 2 Ohio State, No. 3 Kansas and No. 4 Syracuse ... D.J. Gay went all 40 minutes again, meaning he has played in 118 out of a possible 120 minutes during conference games ... The Aztecs had 12 turnovers, a marked improvement over their three games against UNLV last season, when they had 20, 18 and 18 ...

The Aztecs were 4-of-17 behind the arc, or 23.5 percent, and 19-of-53 overall (35.3 percent). Even so, it was not their worst shooting night of the season – having shot 34.8 percent in the 51-46 win against Cal Poly San Luis Obispo ... The technical fouls: Brice Massamba, Chace Stanback and Derrick Jasper for UNLV, and White, Leonard and Chase Tapley for SDSU ... UNLV shot one free throw in the second half ...

One of the signs targeting Willis in "The Show" student section: A blown-up photo from his police mug shot with the words, "Choke Artist." (Willis pleaded no contest to assaulting his girlfriend.) Willis's reaction: "I didn't see any of that."

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### In Small Man's College Game, Big Men Have San Diego State Unbeaten

By Tom Krasovic | AOL FanHouse  
January 14, 2011

College basketball is more a guard's game than the NBA's hulking version of basketball.

So how is it that San Diego State owns the nation's longest active winning streak, despite lacking star talent in its backcourt?

The fast feet, long arms and big hands of SDSU's taller players, notably NBA prospect Kawhi Leonard, are great enablers.

Take Wednesday's hard-earned 55-49 victory over UNLV in a rugged Mountain West Conference game that left No. 6 SDSU (18-0, 3-0) as one of four unbeaten, on a night when No. 1 Duke lost.

UNLV's guards, who are unusually fast and physical, outplayed their Aztecs counterparts.

But SDSU's big men do not need their guards to fare well to get things done, because athletically, the taller Aztecs are guards in big bodies.

Forwards Leonard and Billy White, along with 6-foot-10 center Malcolm Thomas, generated offense by snatching rebounds and launching fast breaks. Or passing to one another from either afar or near. Or out-sprinting the Rebels to loose balls. Or driving to the rim.

Leonard and Thomas amassed 33 rebounds, 29 points and six assists. White sank two three-pointers in the second half, which doubled UNLV's paltry game total.

One more stat: the board work of Leonard (17) and Thomas (16) marked the first time in 90 years of SDSU basketball that two players had 15-plus rebounds in the same game. Heck, the duo exceeded UNLV's total of 31 rebounds.

"They're very good rebounders, very long, very aggressive," said UNLV coach Lon Kruger.

Aztecs coach Steve Fisher couldn't recall as good of a board performance from two of his players. High praise, that, from a man whose best Michigan teams had two future NBA starters -- Chris Webber and Juwan Howard -- on the frontline.

"Kawhi and Malcolm pursue the ball," Fisher said. "Kawhi's got the biggest hands. He has Chris Webber-type hands, where, if the ball touches it, he gets it. Malcolm has gotten so much better at having a feel of where that ball is going to come to, and he is so athletic that he can jump sometimes before the opponent does. And then, they stay with it."

Chicago Bulls general manager Gar Forman was among the spectators at SDSU's sold-out arena, where noise from a crowd of 12,414 reminded UNLV guard Anthony Marshall of games at Louisville and Kansas State.

If Leonard is on the draft board when the Bulls select in June, Forman may draw from Wednesday night's performance.

The 6-foot-7 sophomore led the Aztecs in not only rebounds but points (15), free throws (nine), assists (four) and steals (2).

"He's big and strong and athletic, and does a lot of things very well," Kruger said. "I'd imagine he's as tough of a perimeter matchup as there is in the conference, with all of the tools he has."

Leonard showed an uncertain jumpshot, again, but the California native didn't allow his 3-for-11 shooting to pollute his game. On the contrary, he twice snatched a rebound and went nearly the length of the court to produce points, once on a short shot, once on a pass to the senior Thomas. His outlet passes included one-handed and two-handed strikes that also led to points.

Leonard's facial expression was the same, regardless of the rim-clanging. He said he learned long ago from teammates and coaches that "it's very important" not to let others see his displeasure, "because if I'm out there just very frustrated about me missing shots, my team can see that, and it can probably bring them down. I know there's another side of the game on the defensive end, so I just try to go on defense, try to get a steal, help my team get a rebound, outlet. After that, the game just comes easy."

Don't mistake his stoicism for acceptance, Fisher said.

"We practice tomorrow at 12:45," he said, "and if you walk in here, he'll be here at 12:15 working on his game."

Next up for SDSU's Good Ship Lollipop is a trip to New Mexico. A loss to the Lobos on Saturday wouldn't be stunning if the game is as close as Wednesday's. Undone as much by their 1-for-18 shooting on three-pointers as they were the Aztecs, the Rebels (13-4, 1-2) created open shots aplenty. Among their misses were no fewer than four air-balls.

"We've got to stay after practice and work on shooting," said guard Anthony Marshall, who had a team-high 11 points but was 0-for-4 on threes.

Fisher called it a great victory, the team's 18th in a row since a first-round loss to No. 6 seed Tennessee in last year's NCAA Tournament.

The Aztecs overcame the most athletic backcourt they've faced this season. And with former NFL star Marshall Faulk cheering from press row, SDSU was more combative than some of the Aztecs football defenses that undermined Faulk in his college days. UNLV isn't tall or bulky, but the bumping and shoving resembled a Big East match. Each side incurred three technical fouls. Players from both teams said afterward it was a clean, yet bruising duel. Fisher marveled at his point guard, senior D.J. Gay. A blow to the head left him dizzy. Nonetheless, he played all 40 minutes.

"It was not for the weak and faint of heart," Fisher said. "It was hard fought. We've got to do a better job of managing our emotions. We can't have three technical fouls. ... But, we competed. And so did they, but that's what they expected, and that's what our players expected, to have that kind of arm-wrestling game."

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### Fisher has taken Aztecs to new heights

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 15, 2011

There really is no great secret to Steve Fisher's success. He has become one of the most important sports figures in the history of this city because he was Steve Fisher when he got here and has remained without apology Steve Fisher.

San Diego State's basketball coach is an impresario who knows how to entertain. He's in charge of a movement. And he doesn't take any guff. If you don't like it, hail a cab.

He is what he is, a program builder, who started here from nothing, zero, below scratch. And he's turned a university and a community in which students and citizens always had a tin basketball ear into rabid concertgoers.

Somehow, this uncommon common man, who is neither comedian, rock star, maniac, nor a Rex Ryan blowhard, has whetted this city's appetite for goose bumps, filling its stomach with thrilling, professional goodies.

Steve Fisher is not exciting. What he produces is exciting — nothing perfect, but entertainment with an edge.

Fisher has done what closet and crazed hoopheads once thought impossible. He has turned San Diego into a basketball town. 12,414. Got that number? It's a sellout at Viejas Arena, which has become an insane asylum. Give him time, and Steve Fisher could sell nicotine patches to Carolina tobacco growers.

The coach who once pushed Michigan to a national title has the most important leadership ingredients in his makeup — he listens, and doesn't use one side of his mouth when he speaks. His keel is straight, and yet he is a cancer survivor firmly rooted to the extent he can bend without falling. He is part coach, part CEO, part father figure, part priest.

Fisher is a 65-year-old man with arms long enough to reach back a few generations and pull the best out of kids who don't seem to mind his gray top. Most of his players have succeeded somewhere, sometime. They have egos. They have problems. They come from diverse backgrounds. They are individuals he handles individually.

"I don't treat them all the same, but I feel I treat them all fairly," says the coach who has his Aztecs 18-0 and ranked sixth nationally as they take the country's longest winning streak into New Mexico's Pit this afternoon.

"I treat them with respect. If you feel you've been treated unfairly, you'd better come into my office. I will try to help you be as good as you can be."

It must be remembered Fisher inherited perhaps the worst program in America in 1999, when the Aztecs would be fortunate to draw 12,414 for an entire season. In the beginning, there wasn't even a crawl — winless in Mountain West Conference play his first season — then baby steps, then strides, then longer strides that have taken his program national.

"The more time you spend with people, the more you know them, when to yell, when to pat, when to council," Fisher says. "It's by choice that you're here. There are no bars on the windows."

**"San Diego State's basketball coach is an impresario who knows how to entertain. He's in charge of a movement. And he doesn't take any guff. If you don't like it, hail a cab."**

- Nick Canepa (*San Diego Union-Tribune* -  
"Fisher has taken Aztecs to new heights")

"There are a whole lot of variables, but one thing is consistency. I've had (top assistant) Brian Dutcher here for 12 years, my son Mark for nine. People know what you want and what you need. We get players who fit. I don't want all choirboys, but I do want guys I feel good about."

Fisher knows what it takes to win a national championship. His kids do not. His kids don't know what it's like to go 18-0 at this level. The trick is not allowing the players to get too full of themselves, that defeat can be just around the corner in a very difficult basketball league.

"You always have a bit of a concern how everyone — including coaches — react to success," he says. "We tell them to embrace it, to enjoy it, because it doesn't happen too often. It never happens to most."

What Fisher has assembled is a team that can win in different ways. If you try finesse, the Aztecs will out-finesse you. If you want to get physical, they'll out-physical you. If you want to run, they'll outrun you. If you slow it down, they'll out-slow you.

UNLV, a very good team, tried a street-ball approach before the 12,414 Wednesday night. Didn't work.

SDSU Athletic Director Jim Sterk has known Fisher a brief time, since last February, but he can't help but be impressed by the way his coach handles everything in front of him.

"He's smart, a smart coach who's been around," Sterk says. "The kids know he's both supportive and tough, and they work very hard. He gets them to buy into their roles; he talks about roles all the time."

"He understands there are different pieces to the puzzle, that everyone can't be the same. He's done a great job that way. The common goal."

The common goal has led to 12,414. Viejas no doubt will be sold out the rest of the way.

"I envisioned sellout crowds when I got here," Fisher says. "I can't say I ever envisioned (18-0). But I like both. We've got as good a home crowd as there is in the country. I'm pinching myself."

There's nothing like The 12,414th Man.

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### Aztecs' scoring outbursts have become their calling card

By Dan Hayes | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 15, 2011

There have been 24 times this season in which the San Diego State men's basketball team has gone on an extended scoring run. That means on 24 different occasions, the Aztecs have gone ballistic and run off at least nine straight points, inevitably turning a tight game into an easy victory.

These scoring outbursts occur so frequently that they have effectively become No. 6-ranked SDSU's calling card, so much so that it almost comes as a surprise when one doesn't take place. With good defenders throughout the roster, coach Steve Fisher isn't surprised by his team's ability to blow its opponents' doors off.

"We're a team that can score 10 points in a minute," Fisher said. "We have a long athletic front line, centers, forwards, that even when at times (opponents) are going to get an easy shot or easy look, (Malcolm Thomas) will fly in and block it or (Billy White) will. We change the arc on shots. (TCU) had an uncontested breakaway layup off of a steal and (White) ran a guy down and he had to have set a world record on the 40-yard dash. ... We have done that. We have taken sure baskets and turned them into turnovers.

"In a variety of ways, we have made some plays that have stopped teams, continued a run.

"It's a direct result of working hard together."

The Aztecs (18-0, 3-0 Mountain West Conference) figure to use that blue-collar approach again Saturday in a 3 p.m. game at New Mexico (13-4, 1-1). There are plenty of examples of that approach paying big dividends this season.

Against host Miami (Ohio) on Nov. 22 ---- a contest that saw three different scoring outbreaks ---- the Aztecs went on a 25-0 run over 10 minutes, 27 seconds and turned a tied game into a 64-39 lead. On Dec. 8 in Berkeley, SDSU assured itself of a rare road victory over a Pac-10 opponent by dispersing of Cal with a 12-0 run that increased the lead to 21 points midway through the second half.

And then there was a 131-second span against Wichita State at Viejas Arena on Dec. 4 when the Aztecs scored 14 straight points to go from trailing by a point to shocking the Shockers and taking a 13-point lead.

"The game just gets more fun," forward Kawhi Leonard said. "We know the other team is turning over the ball and we are getting easy transition points on the other end. Knowing that we are stopping them on defense just gives us that energy boost."

There is no template for how an outburst begins. No two runs are exactly the same, either. During a 13-0 run at TCU on Jan. 5, the Aztecs had three earth-shattering dunks. Tim Shelton sparked a 10-0 run against Utah on Jan. 8 by taking four charges, including three on plays in which the Utes likely would have scored. James Rahon had seven points as five different players scored during a 16-0 run on Nov. 22.

No matter how different the start and middle of a run may be, they all end the same way ---- with SDSU suddenly in control of a game that was previously in question.

"There's a lot of different reasons that could light that spark," said guard DJ Gay. "Whether it's Tim (Shelton) taking a charge or (Malcolm Thomas) getting a big dunk or a 3-point play, or (White) getting a dunk, or us coming out of a timeout knowing that we haven't been playing the basketball that we know we can and

know what we have to turn it up to another level."

Gay and his teammates know the key to their runs really boils down to defense.

Fisher has seen his players take that belief to heart. The proof: On two occasions this season ---- including a 55-49 victory over UNLV on Wednesday ---- the Aztecs won games even though they shot worse than 36 percent from the field.

"They have gotten to where they say, 'If we guard, we have a chance,' " Fisher said, " 'even if we go 0-for-18 from 3-point range.' "

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### No. 6-ranked Aztecs win, and win big, at The Pit

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 16, 2011

Shortly before tipoff at New Mexico's famed basketball arena that is dug 37 feet into the ground and has recorded decibel levels registering somewhere between a jackhammer and a jet engine, the announcer screams: "The Pit, a mile high and louder than ..."

A library?

A church?

The back nine?

"It's a good feeling," San Diego State point guard D.J. Gay said, "to go from not being able to hear someone five feet away from you to being able to have a conversation."

The No. 6 Aztecs did more Saturday afternoon than just win 87-77 at The Pit, where New Mexico loses with the frequency of comet sightings. They silenced it. Shut it up. Muffled it. Pressed some sort of celestial mute button. At timeouts, the arena scoreboards kept beseeching the red-clad Lobo Nation that it was "time to howl" while wolf sounds echoed through the speakers.

Crickets.

This was not just another win on a 19-0 record (4-0 in the Mountain West Conference) that long ago broke a host of school records. This was a statement game, a terse memo to the members of the national media who predicted SDSU's fall from the unbeaten in Albuquerque, a clear message that a No. 6 national ranking in both major polls might be too low.

This was an 18-point lead in the second half in a building where New Mexico had won 16 straight and against a team that had defeated six consecutive ranked opponents.

This was making 13-of-20 from behind the three-point arc after New Mexico brashly dared them to shoot and they bricked their first five. This was finding a way despite major foul trouble among the front line and a rather glaring disparity in free throws (at one point, New Mexico had taken 21 to SDSU's five).

This was Kawhi Leonard slicing down the lane late in the game and violently dunking over two Lobos, then hitting a pull-back three on the next possession with a defending draped on him. This was Malcolm Thomas, despite having four fouls, swatting a shot by New Mexico forward Drew Gordon at the other end.

This was Gay making a three-pointer with 29 seconds left in the first half, then netting a heave from the opposite side of midcourt at the halftime buzzer. Then the coaching staff diagramming a play for him at halftime to free him for an open three to start the second half, and making that one, too, en route to a career-high 30 points.

"We have had good fortune and come in here and maybe gotten lucky at times," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said, "but today was not luck. We were very good. New Mexico did not give us this game. We earned it."

The Lobos (13-5, 1-2) watched the Aztecs on tape, saw their big men dominating inside, looked at the recent stat sheets with 4-of-17s and 4-of-22s and 3-of-20s behind the arc, and concocted a game plan that packed the middle.

"The No. 6 Aztecs did more Saturday afternoon than just win 87-77 at The Pit, where New Mexico loses with the frequency of comet sightings. They silenced it. Shut it up. Muffled it. Pressed some sort of celestial mute button."

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "No. 6-ranked Aztecs win, and win big, at The Pit")



Said New Mexico coach Steve Alford: "The guys did a really good job of following what we wanted them to do."

And it worked. For nine minutes.

The Aztecs couldn't get the ball inside, and they kept missing from long range. Three early turnovers didn't help, either.

The score over the next 20 minutes: 55-30, SDSU.

The key stretch was a mere 43 seconds on either side of halftime. Gay's three straight three-pointers pushed a two-point lead into double digits, and the Lobos never got closer than eight the rest of the way – and that was with 45 seconds left. When James Rahon drained a three from the right corner with 10:58 to go, the margin ballooned to 61-43.

Crickets.

"We did our job of stopping them inside," said New Mexico's Gordon, who had 23 points and 14 rebounds. "Then we had to readjust to a team on fire from the outside. It was very difficult to try to change the game plan during the course of the game."

Thomas and Billy White? They each had three fouls early in the second half and finished with a combined 11 points.

No problem. Gay made a career-high seven threes (in 11 attempts) while coming off the floor for a grand total of 1:25 playing at a mile high. Leonard had 19 points and 15 rebounds before fouling out. Tapley had his most productive game of the season, with 15 points on 5-of-8 shooting to go with five rebounds and three assists.

The 13 total three-pointers was a season high and equals the most by the Aztecs in 13 years and 168 games of Mountain West Conference history.

As yet another one splashed into the net, the 15,411 jammed into The Pit grew quieter and quieter.

Time to howl? It was more like time to scowl.

"When you make a big shot and it goes silent, when you can hear our bench cheering," SDSU forward Tim Shelton said, "I mean, as a player it's something you just have to love."

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### Gay scores 30 as Aztecs tame Pit, stay unbeaten

By Glen Rosales | North County Times  
January 16, 2011

Not many opposing players' eyes light up when descending into New Mexico's notorious Pit.

But San Diego State's D.J. Gay's eyes must positively sparkle as he careens down the steep ramp leading to the court.

For the second straight season, he established a career high here, erupting for 30 points Saturday to lead the No. 6-ranked Aztecs to an 87-77 victory.

"I love coming here," Gay said after SDSU improved to 19-0 and 4-0 in the Mountain West Conference. "I love playing here. It's a very great arena, a very great crowd. Not many places that you can go to and not hear the person standing 5 feet away from you. So I just enjoy being here."

Of course, he enjoyed this year's game much more than the one last season, when he had a chance to give the Aztecs the lead with less than three seconds to go. But Gay missed one of three foul shots, sending the game into overtime. SDSU eventually lost 88-86 despite his 25 points.

"You never forget having the ball in your hands to win the game and missing the shot," he said. "I'm not going to lie -- it was definitely on my mind when we played (Saturday). And luckily my shot was falling, and I was just able to come out here and have a great game."

A great game, indeed, as he added four assists with just one turnover. Gay made

7-of-11 3-pointers and was 9-of-14 from the line, including his last six to stave off a late comeback attempt by New Mexico (13-5, 1-2).

"I've said repeatedly that D.J. Gay is our most important player," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said. "And I somewhat qualified it, probably making him mad, saying he's not our best player but he's our most important player. I said (Saturday) after the game, he's inching up to not only be our most important player, but our best player. He was fantastic."

Nothing was more fantastic than his swished shot from 55 feet away as the first-half buzzer sounded, sending SDSU into the locker room with a 37-29 advantage.

"It was huge," Fisher said. "And I told our players, to be honest with you, the Pit owed us one. (Darlington) Hobson made one from further than that last year when we played them here. So I felt like it was justice in New Mexico."

San Diego State pulled away after halftime to a lead that grew to 61-43 after a James Rahon 3-pointer with 11 minutes left, stifling the sellout crowd of 15,411. That brought smiles to the Aztecs' faces.

"It's a good feeling to come into an environment like this and going from not being able to hear somebody 5 feet away from you to being able to hold a conversation," Gay said with a wide grin.

Muting the crowd was part of the SDSU game plan.

"There's so many fans in here, and we just tried to shut them down on the offensive end," said Kawhi Leonard, who finished with a double-double of 19 points and 15 rebounds.

Chase Tapley played a pivotal role in the outcome, as well, equaling his season high with 15 points.

"I just found open shots and knocked them down," he said.

#### Aztecs notes

SDSU's 19-game winning streak is the longest in the country. It's also a school and conference record. ... The Aztecs' 13 3-pointers marked a season high and equaled their most in a conference game. They last did it Feb. 24, 2001 against Nevada-Las Vegas. ... D.J. Gay's seven 3-pointers tied him for the third most in a game since Steve Fisher became coach in 1999.

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### Awesome Aztecs

By Mark Smith | Albuquerque Journal  
January 16, 2011

The nation's top five college basketball teams must really be something.

Because No. 6 is flat-out terrific.

On Saturday, the New Mexico Lobos learned what they probably knew all season, but hadn't witnessed first-hand.

They are in the same league as San Diego State - but in name only.

The sixth-ranked Aztecs (19-0, 4-0) shook off a slow start and ripped the Lobos 87-77 in the Pit in a Mountain West Conference display of dominance.

The Lobos (13-5, 1-2) made the final margin respectable by hitting six 3-pointers in the final eight minutes. But they made just one before that, and never truly made a game of it after SDSU's D.J. Gay's half-court shot at the halftime horn gave his team a 37-29 lead.

The big bomb came three seconds after UNM's Phillip McDonald missed a 3-pointer.

"That didn't help," Lobo coach Steve Alford said. "We were only down five, and we take a shot that was too quick. We've got to know better. Now they get a rebound and a chance to get a shot up. Now you're down eight and you don't get the ball (to start the second half)."

San Diego State coach Steve Fisher said Gay's shot was karma.

"The nation's top five college basketball teams must really be something. Because No. 6 is flat-out terrific."

- Mark Smith (*Albuquerque Journal* - "Awesome Aztecs")

"That was huge," Fisher said, "and I told our players, 'to be honest, the Pit owed us one - (Darington) Hobson made one from farther than that last year.' So I felt it was justice in New Mexico."

On Saturday, Hobson was in the Pit as a fan. Last year, he was on the floor and made a three-quarter court shot just before halftime in the Lobos' 88-86 overtime victory.

It's a loss that Gay remembers well.

He had a career-high 25 points in the outing but wasn't celebrating. At the end of regulation and the Aztecs down two points, he missed one of three free throws to allow UNM to get to overtime.

"You never forget having the ball in your hands to win a game, then missing the shot," said Gay, who had 30 points on Saturday to set a new career high. "I'm not going to lie; it was definitely on my mind as I played tonight. Luckily my shot was falling and I was able to have a great game."

Gay wasn't the main guy the Lobos worried about stopping.

They tried clogging up the paint against San Diego State's powerful inside game in an attempt to make SDSU beat them from outside.

It worked. At least until Aztec guards Chase Tapley and Gay abused New Mexico from long range.

"You've got to pick your poison," Alford said.

While 6-foot-9 Malcolm Thomas, 6-7 Kawhi Leonard and 6-8 Billy White - all NBA hopefuls - were held to a combined eight points in the opening half, Tapley and Gay went a combined 8-of-14, including 6-of-10 from 3-point land.

Gay had his team's final 12 points of the half, all on 3s.

And in case New Mexico thought about making a second-half run, Gay made a statement right after intermission with yet another 3-point dagger.

"I've said it repeatedly, that D.J. Gay is our most important player," Fisher said. "... He's inching up to not being only our most important player, but our best player."

After getting down by 18 points, the Lobos did make it respectable. But anytime they threatened to actually make it a game, SDSU responded.

"There's a difference in shooting when you're down 18 than when it's a tight game," Alford said. "We did not make a lot of shots when it truly mattered, when the game was close."

Gary hit a 3 and Kendall Williams made two free throws to cut it to 65-55. But Leonard hit a clutch 15-foot jumper to beat the shot clock.

Moments later, Gary made a deep 3.

Leonard came right back with a vicious slam after driving past three Lobos.

Then, Tony Snell hit a 3 to make it 71-61. Forget it - Leonard answered right back with a 3.

The sellout Pit crowd of 15,411 tried to will the Lobos back on a number of occasions, but was repeatedly silenced.

Gary and junior forward Drew Gordon each scored 23 points for UNM. Gordon had a team-high 14 rebounds while Gary added seven assists and is just one shy of tying the career MWC record in that category.

Leonard had 19 points and 15 rebounds for SDSU while Tapley had 15 points.

### SDSU hoops bandwagon filling up

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 18, 2011

Outside San Diego State's Viejas Arena on Wednesday night, you are liable to see people walking around with an index finger stuck firmly into the evening air. They might be professing their belief that the Aztecs should be the nation's No. 1 college basketball team, or they might be looking for a ticket.

Neither, suddenly, is a stretch on Montezuma Mesa.

The Aztecs enter Wednesday's game against the Air Force Academy with a 19-0 record and No. 6 national ranking in both major polls, and that's out of a possible 345 Division I schools. As of Monday afternoon, Viejas Arena was within 450 tickets (all for the Feb. 8 game against Utah) of selling out the season's seven remaining games. They have the nation's best record. They have its longest active win streak.

The Aztecs do.

San Diego State.

This is not a school, or a city, steeped in basketball tradition that is recapturing past glory or merely sustaining it. This is a program that before October had never appeared in either major Top 25 ranking, one of which, by The Associated Press, has been around since 1949. A program that has never won a game in the NCAA Tournament in 41 years of Div. I status. A program that claims as its only major championship an anonymous NAIA title over Murray State in 1941.

A program that, when Steve Fisher took over as coach in 1999, had 13 losing seasons in the previous 14 years and then promptly went 5-23.

A city that has had two NBA teams leave, had two ABA teams fold, never won a state high school title in the largest boys division and produced only a handful of NBA players compared to dozens, even hundreds, in pro football and baseball.

**"Outside San Diego State's Viejas Arena on Wednesday night, you are liable to see people walking around with an index finger stuck firmly into the evening air. They might be professing their belief that the Aztecs should be the nation's No. 1 college basketball team, or they might be looking for a ticket."**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "SDSU hoops bandwagon filling up")

"It's like a dream come true for me, and I'm pretty sure anybody else," said senior forward Malcolm Thomas, who attended nearby Crawford High and went to his first Aztecs game when he was 12. "This is ... this is ..."

Thomas smiled and shook his head, words momentarily escaping him.

"This is just amazing."

Or as Fisher put it: "It's what you close your eyes and say, 'Boy, wouldn't it be nice if?' Now that has become reality."

Fisher was speaking at his weekly news conference, a Monday lunchtime affair that is typically populated by one or two newspaper hacks and maybe a couple camera crews. Fisher was speaking into seven minicams, including one from Spanish-language television.

The national media has started to notice as well, and it has got to where the athletic department's media relations staff — usually pleading for national coverage — actually turns down requests for interviews and game credentials.

"If we wanted to, Coach could do an interview every hour of every day," assistant athletic director Mike May said. "We're turning down major-market requests just because of time constraints."

What has prevented the larger college basketball world from ignoring the Aztecs, from writing them off as just another pretender from outside one of the traditional power conferences, is that their resume isn't padded with marshmallows and last-second miracle shots. No team in the current Top 10 played or won more games on the road in November and December. And SDSU has yet to trail in a game inside seven minutes to go.

"We knew we would be good," said Fisher, who returned all five starters from a 25-9 team. "How good I don't think any of us knew, or still know."

They've done it with a mix of seniors (D.J. Gay and Billy White), key transfers (Thomas and James Rahon) and a superstar sophomore (Kawhi Leonard) who chose SDSU over higher-profile teams from the Pacific 10 Conference because the Aztecs recruited him first and he wanted to reward that loyalty. And a 65-year-old head coach with a Midwestern stoicism who calls his players "gang," doesn't like to "carp" on mistakes and occasionally will bust out a "criminally" for emphasis.

They've also developed an imposing home-court advantage, the convergence of a pit-like arena where the sound washes downward and a 3,000-strong student section that has become increasingly vocal and venomous. (Last week it held up a sign, directed at a UNLV guard accused of assaulting his girlfriend, that said: "Choke artist.")

Viejas Arena, which was known as Cox Arena for its first 12 years, sold out just eight times in the first 201 games. Wednesday's sellout will be the seventh in nine games this season, and the final total almost certainly will be 13.

"The name on it has changed, but the arena is no different," said Fisher, whose Aztecs had an average attendance of 2,618 during his first season. "The atmosphere is like a 180. It's fun to come. They come early now and stay late. They appreciate what's going on, and they feel a part of what's going on.

"I sincerely have said it with conviction: We've got as good a home crowd as there is in the United States. I pinch myself to make sure that I'm saying what's fact, but it is."

It has long been a missing component at a university that does not have an on-campus football stadium and has been known as a "commuter school," with little life after the parking lots empty each afternoon.

"With everything that has been going on with the state (budget), and those of us who are Charger and Padres fans, it hasn't been all that wonderful in the past few years," says James Kitchen, SDSU's vice president for student affairs. "It started with football going to a bowl game. Then basketball started and with the hype we got, it's all escalated.

"People who have not associated themselves with Aztecs athletics at all are now coming out of the woodwork."

Kitchen knows how a frenetic following for a school's basketball can transform a campus. He worked at Kansas when the Jayhawks were ranked No. 1. He worked at UNLV when it won an NCAA championship.

"The students really need something to rally around," Kitchen said. "There is no football stadium on campus, but Viejas Arena is right there in the middle of campus. ... And to see an arena like Viejas being packed and filled up like (UNLV's) Thomas & Mack or (Kansas') Allen Fieldhouse is heaven on earth."

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### Walton hopes Aztecs mature enough to keep working hard

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 18, 2011

"When life looks like easy street, there's danger at your door."  
— Jerry Garcia

It was half-past breakfast Monday morning and Bill Walton already was quoting that Grateful Dead lyric. The world's foremost Deadhead Hoophead was tapping the brake, looking both ways, exercising caution.

Bill Walton has known the unexpected crash and will tell you to this day he still feels the pain perhaps created by overconfidence and a hiccup in the paying-attention-to-details department. Just because you're handed the keys to a Porsche doesn't mean it can't blow a tire.

We were discussing San Diego State's 19-0 basketball team and its unprecendented No. 6 ranking. We were discussing how every so often the stars will align in the college game, how the perfect storm will develop thanks to talented players staying in school and seeing things through.

This is what's happened at State in coach Steve Fisher's 12th season. All five of his seniors play, and three of them — forwards Malcolm Thomas and Billy White and point guard D.J. Gay — start. And that can mean so much if your seniors are very good, tough, tournament-hardened and have improved — and they are and they have.

Most of these players last year went to the NCAA Tournament. What's brought 19-0 is that they not only returned — including their best, sophomore Kawhi Leonard — but they've improved.

Some teams, some athletes, stay the same or take steps back. Under Fisher, we've seen what can happen when talented kids get better — and continue to buy into that they're being taught.

But Walton, for what dough I have the greatest college player of all time, painfully recalls his senior year at UCLA, when the Bruins saw their 88-game win streak snapped at lesser Notre Dame; how they fell apart in the Final Four to a North Carolina State team they had trampled earlier in the season.

"Maturity is important, what with the changing nature of youth sports, the tenuous nature of the game and the selfish individuals with agendas," Walton was saying. "That's why it's great to see what Coach Fisher has put together, building a program to the point where you can't buy a ticket.

"The kids have to realize their days in college are their best days. They have to realize that by working together anything is possible. We see it regularly from Duke. Coach Fisher has put together a team with exquisite perimeter play; great, dominant inside play and a relentless offensive attack. There is a real chance for them to do something special."

But he then added: "Only if you remain humble and hungry and realize how fragile everything is. That's where maturity can come in."

What makes this Aztecs team so exciting is that it often goes on incredible runs when it puts an end to games in a few minutes. The better ones will do that. John Wooden's teams at UCLA went on thunderous, remarkable, frightening runs.

But as much as Walton likes State and admires Fisher, he knows there very well could be games when runs don't come, and he's bothered by the Aztecs' penchant for waiting until the second half before hammering the throttle.

"It's a bit disconcerting that this team comes out and plays flat in early moments," he said. "In college basketball, there are so few games. It's a celebration of life, but you only have it twice a week. Bring it! When the red light goes on, be ready to explode.

"They have to realize; they have to know. At the end of the season, you may have a talented team, but nobody remembers 19-0; nobody remembers being ranked sixth. If you can win at the end of the season, it stays with you the rest of your life.

"They clearly are talented enough, which is why it's so critical that they listen to their coach. Coach Fisher is a championship coach. He knows maturity teaches you how hard it is to win."

It's good to hear someone as optimistic as Walton settle things down to the level of earth. There hasn't been an unbeaten college team in 35 years. It's unlikely there will be one now.

The Aztecs at times have performed brilliantly. They have won big games away from home. I don't know how many people realize how hard it is to win at New Mexico — let alone dominate, as State did last Saturday. It was terribly impressive.

But they have to stay in their skin.

"So far, it's been so exciting for the university, the fans and the town," Walton said. "But with that comes responsibility for the players, who now have a good opportunity. It's a self-standard of excellence.

"It's important that these players don't read in your column about how great they are, but how close they are, how fragile and tenuous it is, how they must listen to their coach.

"Be humble. Be hungry. Coach Fisher knows it's about tomorrow. Air Force. Seven p.m. Viejas Arena."

Steve Fisher doesn't seem the Deadhead type, but it might be wise to put that Jerry Garcia lyric above the locker room door.

**San Diego State's turnaround energizes success-starved fan base**

By Jeff Eisenberg | YahooSports.com  
January 18, 2011

Tom Ables has grown so accustomed to sparse crowds during his 65 years attending San Diego State home games that he could hardly believe the scene before the Aztecs' New Year's Eve matchup with Division III Occidental.

Parking garages overflowed with cars. Students went to the game instead of the beach. And inside Viejas Arena, there were no empty seats.

The same school that once struggled to give away free tickets attracted 12,414 paying customers for a non-conference tune-up against an opponent known more for its rigorous curriculum than its basketball program. That's as many fans as UCLA and USC drew combined the same day for marquee matchups against Washington and Washington State.

"It was a throwaway game against a Division III team on New Year's Eve, and it was a sellout for gosh sakes," Ables said. "That's an indication that this community has really jumped on board. Even for me, it's a shock to realize the interest is at that high a level."

Although coach Steve Fisher has led his once-moribund program to a 19-0 record and its first-ever national ranking this season, his greatest accomplishment may be transforming San Diego into a rabid college basketball town. Excitement among San Diego State fans has reached unprecedented levels with the sixth-ranked Aztecs one of only three undefeated teams in the nation after back-to-back impressive wins over UNLV and New Mexico last week.

San Diego State will sell out at least 11 of 15 home games this season, three more than the previous 13 years combined. Aztecs basketball jerseys and t-shirts are flying off the shelves at a record pace, the director of a San Diego-based chain of retail shops reports. The Mountain West favorites have even loosened the Padres and Chargers' stranglehold on local sports talk radio.

"Aztec basketball is the thing to do in San Diego right now, and our kids are proud of that," Fisher said. "San Diego, people say, is an event city, and this is an event now. I told our players last year if they endeared themselves to this crowd by diving on the floor, not getting selfish and playing as hard as they can, it will be appreciated. Obviously winning has set the tone, but our fans appreciate how hard our kids play."

Standing-room-only crowds and talk radio buzz may be everyday events at Kentucky or North Carolina, but this is new for San Diego State. After all, this is a school that has never won an NCAA tournament game, that endured 13 losing seasons in 14 years prior to Fisher's arrival and that until 1997 played many of its games in a gym better suited for high school basketball.

An undersized, aging relic with cramped locker rooms, pullout bleachers and a layer of cement beneath its wooden floor, Peterson Gym was so obsolete by the 1980s that San Diego State coaches avoided showing it to recruits whenever possible.

Its lone concession stand consisted of a card table outside one of the doors and its press row was a temporary table set up four rows up the bleachers at mid-court. Decades of San Diego State players had to share lockers with physical education students who also used the facility.

"Between recruiting to it and practicing there, you've got to be kidding me," recalled forward Steve Copp, who played at San Diego State from 1972 to 76. "If you flew in hard on a layup or dunk, you hit the wall behind the basket. That was a real drawback. And then practicing on that floor every day was really tough on your legs."

Even after its new arena finally opened in 1997, San Diego State didn't receive the instant jolt in recruiting or attendance that other programs typically do. Following a 4-22 season in the new arena's second year, then-athletic director Rick Bay decided he had no choice but to cut ties with fifth-year coach Fred Trenkle and search for a splashy replacement capable of revitalizing the lifeless program.

"Fred did as good a job as you could ever hope for given the situation he inherited, but I thought with the new facility, it was really important to get a name coach, somebody who could bring instant credibility to the program," Bay said.

"I didn't know if I could get it done or not because our record was what it was, we didn't have a lot of money to spend and we didn't have any players really, but I was definitely going to go after a well-known head coach."

After a failed attempt to lure Rick Majerus from Utah and some preliminary conversations with fired St. John's coach Fran Fraschilla, Bay learned from a mutual friend that Fisher had interest in the job.

The ex-Michigan coach appealed to Bay immediately because he brought instant credibility yet his controversial departure from Ann Arbor made him affordable. Michigan fired Fisher in 1997 after an investigation into program improprieties even though he'd led the Wolverines to a national title in 1989 and then taken the Fab Five teams to back-to-back Final Fours in 1992 and 93.

"We needed each other is how I would say it," Bay said. "Steve wanted to get back into coaching in the worst way, but I think he knew it was going to be a political battle for an athletic director to hire him. I think he knew his opportunities were limited."

To say that Fisher was an instant success would be a gross overstatement. Not only did the undermanned Aztecs suffer through a 5-23 season in Fisher's first year at San Diego State, fan support was also so negligible that the new coach would often stuff his pockets full of tickets and give them away on campus the day before a home game.

Desperate to fill their spacious new arena and get greater return on their lucrative investment, San Diego State administrators gradually increased the men's basketball budget for recruiting and assistant coaching salaries to a level competitive with other programs. In return, Fisher made San Diego State into a destination for elite transfers, landing forward Randy Holcomb from Fresno State and guards Tony Bland and Al Faux from Syracuse and Shoreline Community College.

Many thought Fisher would leave for a more high-profile job after that trio helped snap San Diego State's 17-year NCAA tournament drought in 2002, but the Aztecs coach proved them wrong. Fisher endured three more middling seasons before the program truly got rolling behind the likes of Marcus Slaughter, Brandon Heath and Lorenzo Wade, winning the Mountain West in 2006 and posting five straight 20-win seasons entering this year.

"I wouldn't have taken the job if I didn't feel we could win here," Fisher said. "A lot of people said to recruits, 'Why would you go there because if you win he's going to be gone?' But never, ever have I had a job that I didn't feel would be my last job, this one included. When I got this job, I had a seven-year contract, there was stability for me and my family and I thought it would be fun to see if I could leave my mark."

The way Fisher assembled this year's powerhouse team is no different than any of his previous squads at San Diego State. It's a team of overlooked high school prospects and transfers, all but three of whom hail from California.

**"Can a city with as little basketball pedigree as San Diego really become a hoops hotbed? Believe it."**

- Jeff Eisenberg (YahooSports.com - "San Diego State's turnaround energizes success-starved fan base")

Late-blooming forward Malcolm Thomas is a Pepperdine transfer who didn't play organized basketball until his junior year at San Diego's Crawford High.

Lightly recruited combo guard D.J. Gay drew minimal interest from Pac-10 schools because he was only 6-foot tall. And forward Billy White was passed over by top programs because of a high school knee injury and concerns he wouldn't qualify academically.

What makes this year's team a cut above previous Aztecs squads is the presence of a potential NBA first-round pick.

Many Pac-10 schools feared that Kawhi Leonard was too small to play the post in college yet not a consistent enough ball handler or perimeter shooter from the wing, but the sophomore forward has validated San Diego State's unwavering faith in him. The 6-foot-7 Leonard has showcased a quick first step to the rim, impressive defensive versatility and an incredible knack for rebounding, earning Mountain West freshman of the year honors last season and averaging 16 points and 10.3 rebounds this year.

"Kawhi Leonard is a big-time player, Gay does a tremendous job running the show and their complementary players have size, quickness and athleticism," New Mexico coach Steve Alford said. "We're talking about a team that won 25 games last year in a very good league. Last year our league was as good as it's ever been in its 10-year history, and this year it may be even better. San Diego State has been able to do this when the league's been at a high level."

As San Diego State piles up win after win, interest continues to mushroom. Five of the Aztecs' remaining seven home games are already sold out and only a limited number of tickets remain for a Feb. 8 matchup with Utah and a Feb. 16 date against New Mexico.

The enthusiasm reached its peak last Wednesday night when San Diego State hosted UNLV in a key matchup of Mountain West contenders. Among the frenzied towel-waving crowd were a handful of San Diego-area celebrities including former Aztecs running back Marshall Faulk and Padres manager Bud Black.

Four members of the student section arrived dressed as a banana, a gecko, an orange crayon and a gingerbread man. Others waved homemade signs and cardboard cutouts of celebrity faces to distract UNLV free throw shooters. They all participated in a raucous "I believe that we will win" chant just before tipoff and belted out the chorus to Muse's "Uprising" when the pep band played it during a second-half TV timeout.

Once San Diego State finished off a hard-fought 55-49 victory over UNLV, each of the players made a beeline for the student section, clapping, posing for pictures and exchanging high-fives with the fans who offered such fervent support.

"That's our sixth man. That's where our energy comes from," Thomas said. "As soon as we came out before the game and saw everybody waving their towels, we were already energized."

Can a city with as little basketball pedigree as San Diego really become a hoops hotbed? Believe it.

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### Aztecs making it tough on offenses

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 19, 2011

There was D.J. Gay's half-court heave at the halftime buzzer. There was Kawhi Leonard's dunk over half the New Mexico defense. There was the en fuego 13-of-25 shooting from three-point range. There was the double high-post offense that flummoxed a New Mexico team intent on clogging the paint.

But what Lobos coach Steve Alford wanted to talk about — what most coaches want to talk about — after becoming San Diego State's 19th victim in 19 games was something you won't find on ESPN high-lights and doesn't always appear in the box score.

He wanted to talk about defense.

Unglamorous, anonymous, lunch-pail, hard-hat, blue-collar defense.

"The best defensive team we've played all year," Alford said. "They probably don't get enough credit for what they do at the defensive end."

Air Force (10-6, 1-2) gets its crack at the No. 6 Aztecs tonight at sold out Viejas Arena, and after watching film and reviewing last season's two meetings in which the Falcons scored 14 and 17 points in the first half, coach Jeff Reynolds thinks he has come up with an effective offensive game plan.

"We're going to punt," he said.

It is an understandable sentiment for opposing coaches. The Aztecs have four, five, six, seven legitimate scoring options, but what tells you they have been maybe more lethal on the defensive end is that they are 19-0. They have their share of dreadful shooting nights (remember the 0-of-18 behind the three-point arc against Cal Poly?), yet none cost them a game.

"They've gotten to where they say, 'If we guard we've got a chance, even if we go 0-for-18,'" said SDSU coach Steve Fisher.

The statistic most commonly associated with defensive prowess is opponents' field-goal percentage. And in four decades of Division I status, no SDSU team has held opponents under .400 (or 40 percent) for the season.

This season: .396.

The opposing scoring average of 59.1 points also would be a school record.

The Aztecs are even stingier in the Mountain West Conference. In four games, three of them on the road, opponents are shooting .372 overall and .243 from three-point range — both marks on pace to break the conference records of .379 (BYU in 2008) and .283 (Utah last year).

"They're big, they're long, they're athletic, they've got a good demeanor to their defense, they're playing with a sense of urgency at the defensive end," Alford said after his Lobos shot a season-low 37.9 percent against the Aztecs. "That makes them very hard to score against."

Saint Mary's coach Randy Bennett knows. His No. 22-ranked Gaels are 16-2, averaging 84.1 points per game and shooting 51.3 percent. In Viejas Arena on Dec. 1, they managed 55 points and shot 39.3 percent.

Their next lowest scoring output this season is 71.

"And we had to hit some tough shots to get 55," Bennett said. "You get a layup or a good post move, and they block it. ... They are going to make you shoot a three over a hand or a tough two. They do a good job at making you take tough shots."

Reynolds' Air Force team had 48 points against the Aztecs in their first meeting and a season-low 42 in the second game. In the first halves of those games, the Falcons made just 13 of 45 shots (28.9 percent).

"There's one common theme with their team in the last two years," Reynolds said. "They've been the best on-the-ball defensive team that we've faced, and I think there are several good on-the-ball defensive teams in our league. Coach Fisher has his team buying in to playing defense."

And there it is, the two words that most often define defensive success: buying in.

**"The best defensive team we've played all year," Alford said. "They probably don't get enough credit for what they do at the defensive end."**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs making it tough on offenses")

Or as San Diego State assistant coach Justin Hutson likes to say in practice: "Taking it personal."

Hutson has been SDSU's "defensive coordinator" for the past three seasons, and the Aztecs have lowered their defensive field-goal percentage from .443 in 2007-08 to .410 to .404 to the current .396.

The Aztecs play no zone, preferring a hard-nosed man defense that can extend full court and trap the ball, that can speed you up or slow you down. The basic premise is to force teams to take "tough twos" while not allowing open three-pointers.

It seems simple enough. And it isn't.

The Aztecs have evolved from a team that just guards the ball well to playing more complex helpside defense on dribble drives, defending ball screens in several different ways depending on the situation and making multiple rotations on double teams.

"When we force somebody one way," guard D.J. Gay says, "we know that we're going to have somebody there to have our back and somebody else is going to be there to have their back. ... Coach Hut has been riding us on defense extra hard this year. He teaches us new stuff every day. It's just experience and our willingness to buy in and learn."

Hutson charts more than defensive field goal percentage, blocks and steals. He has categories for deflections, hustle plays, offensive rebounds allowed, transition defense, help defense, straight-line drives, contesting shots, even getting stuck on screens. It's all about the details, and accountability.

"We're doing well, but as one of the overseers you always want more," Hutson said. "I think we need to have more stretches where we dominate with our defense. We have spurts, but they need to be longer."

Any longer, and opposing coaches might seriously consider punting.

#### NOTES

The final public tickets available for the Feb. 8 Utah game were purchased Tuesday, meaning all seven remaining home games are now officially sold out ... Air Force has won just two MWC games in two-plus seasons, but they don't have the injury issues of last season and appear much improved. They are 1-2 in conference, beating Utah, losing 76-66 at BYU and leading UNLV by five with 7:39

left before losing ...

The No. 6 Aztecs are the highest ranked opponent Air Force has faced in seven years ... The Aztecs have won five straight against Air Force. When they score 60 or more, they are 22-2 in the series ... Sophomore Michael Lyon leads the Falcons with 13.4 ppg. Senior Tom Fow is making 45.6 percent of his three-point attempts ... Junior guard Shawn Hempsey (La Costa Canyon High) comes off the bench for the Falcons.

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### Father's memory helps drive Aztecs star

By Jeff Goodman | FoxSports.com

January 18, 2011

The memories Kawhi Leonard had of the car wash were ones of fondness, learning the business alongside his father while also using his mammoth hands to scrub until he could see his face in the reflection.

It was a chance to spend quality time with Mark Leonard — the person who had bestowed his unique first name, the one whose meaning was unbeknownst even to his own mother.

The call came from his sister on Jan. 18, 2008, exactly three years ago while he was in the car returning from a high school basketball game.

"She said that our dad died," recalled San Diego State's star sophomore forward without even a hint of emotion in his voice. "I felt like the world stopped."

Mark Leonard was 43 when he was shot and killed at the same car wash in which so many memories were shared.

"I didn't want to believe it," Kawhi said. "It didn't feel real to me."

Leonard went on to play the next night and scored 17 points at Pauley Pavilion as his Riverside King team lost to Compton Dominguez.

"After the game, he just broke down," said his mother, Kim Robertson. "They were close. Very close."

Leonard grew up living primarily with his mother, but spent plenty of time, especially in the summers, with his father, who lived about an hour away and owned that car wash in Compton.

"I'm not sure what happened," Leonard said. "I really don't know anything other than someone random came to the car wash and shot him."

Three years have passed and no one has been arrested in the murder. Frank Salerno of the Los Angeles County Sherriff's Department told the Los Angeles Times that the case likely will go unsolved because of a lack of cooperation among potential witnesses.

"I think it's better for me not knowing who it is," Leonard said.

Leonard never talks about it with his mother. He's a quiet, unpretentious kid who is difficult to get to know off the court — and an unrelenting warrior who plays as hard as anyone in the nation on it.

"I think he thinks about it," Robertson said. "But he never mentions it. Never."

Leonard does think about it. His eyes light up when recalling the times he'd help his father open the 100-percent hand-wash car wash at 8 a.m. and scrub until it closed around 6 p.m.

"It was hard work," Leonard said. "But I loved it."

He smiles when thinking about how the two would jump over the fence in the backyard and run up and down a hill in Moreno Valley for 30 minutes straight. They'd go out and throw the football and also take to the basketball court together.

"When I told him going into my sophomore year that I wasn't going to play football anymore, he got kinda mad," Leonard said. "He wanted me to play both — and maximize my opportunity."

Leonard was an unheralded recruit who was being pursued by Big West programs such as UC Davis until he transferred to Riverside King prior to his junior season.

Leonard didn't even play basketball as a freshman at Canyon Springs High after missing tryouts. Instead, he was a safety and wide receiver — and his future appeared bright on the gridiron.

But his heart was with hoops — his father eventually understood his desire to drop football.

As a junior, Leonard attracted the interest of San Diego State.

"I wasn't as skilled, but I just outworked the next guy," he said.

Then, his senior season, high-majors such as UCLA, USC, Arizona State, Marquette and Michigan became involved.

"I knew I was their second option and that was a big issue for me," Leonard said. "San Diego State told me they would give me the opportunity to come in and start. They weren't going to hand it to me and I'd have to work for it."

That was music to Leonard's ears.

Leonard started 33 of 34 games as a freshman last season and led the Aztecs in both scoring and rebounding.

**"While Kawhi may not talk often about Mark Leonard, his father's memory is one of those things that have kept him on the right track."**

- Jeff Goodman (FoxSports.com - "Father's memory helps drive Aztecs star")

Leonard has proven it was no fluke, this season averaging a double-double (16.0 points per game, 10.3 rebounds per game) and establishing himself as one of the nation's top players for one of the nation's top teams.

San Diego State is 19-0 and one of three undefeated teams — along with Ohio State and Kansas — remaining in the country.

"He's a gym rat," San Diego State coach Steve Fisher said. "He's obsessed with getting better."

Often times, coaches and members of the administration will walk by Peterson Gym early in the morning about 7 and hear the ball bouncing.

"He'll probably be a lottery pick, for sure a first-rounder," added one NBA executive who watched Leonard recently. "He's got the athleticism and you just don't find guys with that kind of motor and work ethic."

But Leonard isn't resting on his laurels. He deflects any questions about whether he'll consider leaving early for the NBA and realizes how quickly everything can be taken away.

"For us to be here now, words can't imagine how good it feels," Leonard said. "It's exciting to know people feel you can move up to the next level, but we're just trying to stay focused on the task. Thinking about other things can get you off track sometimes."

While Kawhi may not talk often about Mark Leonard, his father's memory is one of those things that have kept him on the right track.

"I think he'd be proud of me," Leonard said.

"I know he would," added his mother.

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### Aztecs get the job done to win 20th straight

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune

January 20, 2011

Late in the first half, Kawhi Leonard stole the ball and raced downcourt for an uncontested dunk as sold out Viejas Arena rose in anticipation of the latest highlight in a season filled with them. Leonard chopped his steps, prepared for liftoff and ...

Fumbled the ball.

He picked it up and, almost shrugging, innocuously laid the ball over the rim in-

stead.

It proved to be a continuous theme in San Diego State's 68-55 win against Air Force on Wednesday night that pushed the No. 6 Aztecs to 20-0 and, with no more games this week, could get them a spot in the Top 5 when the next polls are issued Monday.

It wasn't a job well done.

It was a job, well, done.

"Should have played a lot better, but it's a win nonetheless," captain D.J. Gay said.

Air Force (10-7, 1-3) has won two Mountain West Conference games in the last two-plus seasons, and the Aztecs have the nation's best record and longest active win streak. And it wasn't a mismatch.

The Falcons ran their Princeton-style sets, full of back cuts, high-post rubs, slipped screens and false motion. On defense, they alternated between a sagging 2-3 zone, a switching man-to-man and a triangle-and-two hybrid (where three guys played zone and the other two shadowed Gay and Leonard).

They led by six points late in the first half and were still within four points with eight minutes left. Perhaps even more impressively, they made 22-of-43 shots (51.2 percent) to become the first team to shoot above 50 percent against SDSU all season. None of its first four MWC opponents got over 40 percent.

"We had our two best practices of the year Monday and Tuesday," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "We were electric with our effort and enthusiasm. But you have to play within yourself, and I think we got a little frustrated when things didn't go our way."

It was this kind of night: The Aztecs got a steal, went the other way on a 3-on-1 fast break, got the ball to Malcolm Thomas for a dunk ... and he lost the ball on the way up. Then they got another steal and Leonard had a 2-on-1 break with Gay ... and fired a pass a good 10 feet over his head into the stands.

This kind of night: The guy shooting the T-shirt cannon aimed high into the Viejas Arena during a timeout ... and it fell well short, nearly hitting players on the SDSU bench.

Sort of like most Aztecs free throws. They were a putrid 7-of-16 (43.8 percent) and had one sequence where Gay missed the front end of a one-and-one, only for Thomas to get the rebound and get fouled — and miss both free throws.

Mercifully, a lane violation was whistled on Air Force during the second miss and Thomas got another attempt, which he converted.

That made it 49-44, Aztecs, and started a 13-3 run to put away the game. The key baskets both came from senior forward Billy White, both on three-pointers.

White, no doubt, was making up for lost time from a foul-abbreviated first half. He had his second foul less than eight minutes into the game, making it the 11th time in 18 games against Division I foes that he's had two or more fouls in the first half.

"It's frustrating," White said. "It's something I have to work on. I can't really help my team when I'm sitting on the bench five minutes into the game. I have to use my fouls wisely and not use them all up in the first half."

White's defense was also missed, as his length seemed to bother Air Force sharpshooter Tom Fow, who had 16 of his game-high 21 points (on 7-of-11 shooting) in the first half.

In the end, the Aztecs survived behind another deadly effort behind the three-point line (11-of-21 after missing their first five), another big night from Gay (20 points, three assists, zero turnovers), another double-double from Leonard (10 points, 10 rebounds) and another dose of full-court pressure midway through the second half that was relentless as it was ferocious.

"We lost sight of what we do best, and that's control our tempo," Fow said. "We got out of that for a couple minutes, and they went on a run ... If we start trying to play with San Diego, these guys are extremely athletic, extremely quick, ex-

tremely gifted."

#### Notes

The Aztecs get their bye on Saturday and next play at BYU on Wednesday ... SDSU is 5-0 in the MWC for the first time in the league's 12-year history ... Gay and Thomas were honored before the game for both reaching the career 1,000-point plateau at New Mexico on Saturday. Fisher was also honored for winning his 400th game against UNLV last week ... Fans learned the hard way that a sold out game plus the first week of school is a recipe for traffic disaster, and many seats were unoccupied at tipoff. ... After the game, Air Force coach Jeff Reynolds high-fived several members of the SDSU student section, which sits adjacent to the visitor's bench. "I told them the reason they're undefeated is because of those kids," Reynolds said. "That's a great atmosphere. They're into it, and that's what college basketball is all about. Their (students) are into the game, and they do it the right way."

#### 71

#### Leonard makes mark with own brand of 'show time'

By Tim Sullivan | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 20, 2011

You've really got to hand it to Kawhi Leonard. He has the reach to give a bear a bearhug, and the grasp of a vise covered in Velcro.

His hands are so huge that palm readers prefer to read Tolstoy. His wingspan is so wide that he leaves his feet in need of landing clearance. San Diego State's sophomore forward is going to make a lot of money playing basketball, and probably soon.

**"You've really got to hand it to Kawhi Leonard. He has the reach to give a bear a bearhug, and the grasp of a vise covered in Velcro."**

- Tim Sullivan (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Leonard makes mark with own brand of 'show time'")

"He's going to play in the NBA," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said Wednesday night. "It's a question of when."

It's a question that has become increasingly rhetorical. Wednesday's 68-55 victory over Air Force was among the least artistic of the unbeaten Aztecs' 20 wins, but it did nothing to detract from the escalating excitement Leonard is generating among NBA scouts. On a night when possessions were prolonged by Air Force's deliberate half-court game, the Mountain West Conference's top-ranked rebounder grabbed another 10 boards, scored 10 points, blocked two shots, made three steals and was credited with two assists.

Kawhi Leonard is not some big lummoX overpowering the Lilliputians, but a power forward with bona-fide ball skills. He started the last sequence of Wednesday's game palming the ball as if it were a baseball, and then weaving in and out of traffic with a crossover dribble.

"Biggest hands I've ever seen," said Aztecs forward Billy White.

"He reminds me of Chris Webber," Fisher said, "not only with the size (of his hands), but the sureness of them. He doesn't lose many balls that he gets a hand on."

And his hands are not the half of it. Rebounding is both a knack and a rugged process of natural selection, and Leonard has both the muscular body for banging and a keen instinct for where the ball will be. He has too much to offer and too little left to prove to justify another season of amateur apprenticeship at SDSU. His stock has been rising like the Dubai skyline.

"He's got great instincts," New Mexico coach Steve Alford said Monday on the Mountain West's weekly conference call. "He's got a great basketball IQ. His shooting has improved. He has a much more aggressive demeanor this year. He takes smaller guards to the post. If he has someone bigger (on him), they're playing some point-forward more this year and that makes for a difficult matchup. And you have to block him out on every attempt."

That is, of course, if you can.

Establishing position on Kawhi Leonard is not the same thing as denying him a rebound. He had four offensive rebounds Wednesday night — as many as the entire Air Force team — most notably a grab of his own miss with 12:40 remaining that helped transform a two-point game into a late-breaking romp.

Leonard sank his second-chance shot while being fouled by the Falcons' Tom Fow. He missed the free throw, but the Aztecs retained possession and ex-

panded their lead to a more comfortable seven-point margin with a three-point shot by James Rahon.

"I know he's more confident in every part of his game," Fisher said. "And what he has done a really good job of was when we said, 'Kawhi, as good as you are and as strong as you are, you've got to get to the free throw line.' He's learned to put the ball on the floor and not get charges and be smart-aggressive."

Leonard agrees with the aggressiveness assessment, and credits his teammates for an increased comfort level and Fisher for "pulling me aside" for detailed instructions.

The scouts have taken note. Several pre-draft projections now show Leonard being selected between Picks 17-20, and those projections are predicated on numerous underclassmen making themselves eligible. Should some of those players elect to stay on campus, Leonard could go higher. Should the Aztecs continue to showcase Leonard as the star player of an undefeated team, he might go significantly higher.

The NBA's 2011-12 Rookie Salary Scale ensures that any player picked in the top 23 will make at least a million dollars in salary during his first season. Should Leonard move as high as the 10th spot, he would collect nearly \$4 million over the course of his first two seasons.

For most 19-year-olds, that amounts to life-changing money.

"I will act as a sounding board for him," Fisher said. "I think I can get him surer feedback than anybody ... Then he'll have a decision to make."

The decision should be easy. Kawhi Leonard is good enough to be gone.

72

### Aztecs become first team in nation to reach 20 wins

By Dan Hayes | North County Times  
January 20, 2011

San Diego State became the nation's first team to reach 20 victories on Wednesday night. But don't count on most of the Aztecs putting this one in their scrapbooks.

In spite of 10 turnovers, including seven in the second half, and nine missed free throws in 16 tries, SDSU managed to stay perfect with a 68-55 Mountain West Conference victory over Air Force at Viejas Arena.

D.J. Gay had a team-high 20 points on 6-of-11 shooting from 3-point range and Billy White scored 10 points in 2 minutes, 20 seconds late in the second half for the sixth-ranked Aztecs (20-0, 5-0 in MWC).

The win sets up a showdown against ninth-ranked BYU in Provo, Utah, next Wednesday. But if SDSU is to stand a chance to win in Provo for the first time since January 2005, it will have to play significantly better than it did on Wednesday.

"We definitely didn't play our best," said Gay, who has 50 points and is 13-of-22 from 3-point range in the last two games.

"We are happy with a win. We should have played a lot better, but it's a win nonetheless. We can't be satisfied with where we are -- 20-0 is great, but we've got a big game ahead of us."

The Aztecs needed Gay to bust the Falcons' zone.

Air Force (10-7, 1-3) frustrated Malcolm Thomas and Kawhi Leonard by focusing defensively on the interior. Thomas and Leonard combined for 18 points on 8-of-21 shooting.

But Gay -- who scored a career-high 30 points in Saturday's win at New Mexico -- took advantage. His four 3-pointers in the first half kept SDSU within striking distance as the Falcons and Tom Fow (21 points) made 57 percent of their shots.

Gay then added another 3-pointer early in the second half to extend the Aztecs' lead to 39-32, and his final 3 made it a 14-point lead with 1:57 remaining.

"He's playing incredible right now," White said. "That's what he has to do for us to win.

"He's on fire right now. He's taking good shots, and he's making 'em."

Miscues on easy shots kept the Aztecs from blowing Air Force out.

Several breakaways led to errant passes or missed layups and dunks. Leonard fumbled one dunk early but recovered in time for a layup. He wasn't as lucky in the second half, when one of his passes wound up 10 feet into the stands. Thomas was also headed for a breakaway dunk early in the second half but fumbled it as well -- though Thomas believed he was fouled on the play.

Then there was the team's treacherous showing at the free-throw line. But even so, San Diego State coach Steve Fisher was happy with his team's 11-of-26 shooting from 3-point range.

"I wished we would have played better, but we're pleased with the victory," Fisher said. "I think the frustration was self-imposed as much by things we did. You're not going to play a perfect game.

"We were able to work our way through that, but not as smoothly as we'd like."

White anchored a run that put this one away. Following a shot-clock violation by Air Force, White hit a 3-pointer to give SDSU a 52-44 lead with 6:37 left.

After the Falcons cut the lead to seven with a free throw, White hit another deep 3. Chase Tapley then had a steal and made two free throws, and White added another free throw to make it 58-45. White later was fouled on a putback with 4:17 left and completed a 3-point play to give his team a 14-point lead.

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### Undefeated San Diego State enjoys life among college basketball's elite

By Marcia C. Smith | Orange County Register  
January 20, 2011

The pre-March Madness madness -- the 12,000-plus heartbeats throbbing, the 24,000-plus sneakers stomping, the red and black war-painted faces howling, the Freddy Krueger-masked kid flexing his biceps, the banana-suited guy slipping through student section, and everybody from the costumed Gecko, the Turtle and the Orange Crayon to plain-clothed Chargers Pro Bowl tight end Antonio Gates chanting "I-be-lieve-that-we-will-win" -- began well before tipoff Wednesday night inside Viejas Arena.

The newest, hottest, standing-room-only attraction in Southern California sports -- San Diego State basketball -- was grab-three-Advil loud and skinny-jeans tight. The stands were as cramped as airline coach, as festive as a Rose Bowl float and as wild as a Disneyland ride, which is appropriate since everybody's piling into Aztec Bowl these days to see a Cinderella in the making.

With Wednesday night's 68-55 Mountain West Conference victory over Air Force, the Aztecs (20-0, 5-0) extended the nation's longest-active and school-record winning streak to 20 games and became Division I's first 20-game winner this season.

Everything feels new and exciting for the players, the coaches and the fans, who are experiencing, as one sophomore fan and apparent non-English major called it, "the most awesomest" season in program's 90-year-history.

The Aztecs, despite logging 20 victories in each of the past five seasons, had never been ranked before this season. They now own their highest-ever spot (No. 6) in the AP poll, an astronomical RPI (No. 2) and -- dare we print this -- virgin hope for an NCAA championship.

"Everything feels new and exciting for the players, the coaches and the fans, who are experiencing, as one sophomore fan and apparent non-English major called it, "the most awesomest" season in program's 90-year-history."

- Marcia C. Smith (*Orange County Register* - "Undefeated San Diego State enjoys life among college basketball's elite")

The Aztecs never had started 5-0 in the conference in 41 years at the Division I level. They never before had "Jim Rome is Burning," ESPN and Sports Illustrated watch regular-season practice. Said top-scoring sophomore Kawhi Leonard, "I've never even had so many people I've never met know my name."

This is an Aztecs team of unsung veterans, late bloomers, transfers, former projects and Pac-10 scouting oversights who play hard, play unselfishly and play together. Having a winning basketball team or a winning anything has inspired a



city that repeatedly has been heartbroken by the underachievement of the Chargers and the Padres, abandoned by even the Clippers and more attentive in the past of the defending NBA champion Lakers and traditional NCAA power UCLA.

What's absent in plump statistics and plump reputations, thunderous dunks and showboating punks and "SportsCenter" flash and dash the Aztecs make up for in linebacker-like toughness, depth, versatility, effort and second and third effort. They pride themselves on deft ballhandling, offensive rebounding, coordinated defense, frontcourt dominance and the second-half comeback experience of five returning starters, including three seniors.

Poker-faced senior point guard D.J. Gay dishes, launches timely teardrop threes and steadies the sometimes rocky ship. "There are no egos on this team," said the captain who gets giddy seeing SDSU just behind as big-timers Ohio State, Kansas, Syracuse, Duke and Pittsburgh in the rankings.

Sophomore guard Chase Tapley scrubs the floor in search of his next steal. Senior Malcolm Thomas, a transfer from Pepperdine, is a kinetic sculpture of jumps and swats. He couples with potential NBA prospect/ubiquitous rebounding octopus Leonard and senior Billy White to form one of the nation's best frontcourts.

"We've been building for a season like this to put us on the map, and I guess it took winning 19 straight," Gay said before his team-high 20 points in Wednesday's 20th consecutive victory. "We've stuck together and set our goals together. We want to be NCAA champions."

That might sound a little lofty for the breakout program that plays in a mid-major conference, that never has advanced beyond the first round of the NCAA Tournament and never has been this almost-famous.

"It's definitely a big change here in how much love we're getting," sophomore reserve forward Alec Williams (JSerra) said. "How far we go is in our hands."

For the players who have been toiling in the mid-major shadows and quietly logging 20-plus victories in each of the past five seasons, the current success is no fairy tale, although top-scorer Leonard said: "I once thought I was imagining things when I looked up in the student section as saw a poster of me, drawn all blue, flying, looking like an avatar."

The Aztecs are for real, now having proved that 20 times over, including seven times in front of a home sellout crowd of 12,414.

"I tell the players to enjoy this, soak it up, look at what they've done and savor every victory because this is very special," said Aztecs coach Steve Fisher, coach of Michigan's 1989 NCAA champion and the "Fab Five" coach who has seen and lived it all in two decades of college basketball.

Fisher (402-231, career; 218-149, SDSU) took over this moribund program in 1999-2000, went 5-23 that first season, drew average crowds of 2,618 and walked around campus offering students his solid handshake, wholesome smile, Midwestern manners and free tickets.

He would lose his pants on Montezuma Mesa today if people thought he was pocketing Aztecs tickets. The school on Tuesday announced the sellout of the remaining home schedule, giving SDSU 13 sold-out games this season. The Aztecs had eight combined in their previous 13 seasons in Viejas (nee Cox) Arena.

"Everybody loves it when you win, and I'm not any different," said Fisher, whose Aztecs have only one ranked team — No. 9 BYU on Jan. 26 in Provo, Utah, and again Feb. 26 at home — to face this regular season. "We also know that we need to keep winning because we will be the quickest to drop and the furthest to drop once we lose."

Nobody in these stands wants this party to end.

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### Front court of Leonard, Thomas and White receiving national acclaim

By Dan Hayes | North County Times  
January 22, 2011

Lengthy. Quick. Athletic. Versatile.

Those are some of the many superlatives that have been dished out by college basketball analysts in describing San Diego State's front court of sophomore forward Kawhi Leonard and senior forwards Malcolm Thomas and Billy White. With

the Aztecs ranked sixth in the nation and off to a school-best 20-0 start, praise has been pouring in from across the nation.

Former Michigan and Arizona State coach Bill Frieder ---- now a radio analyst for Westwood One ---- believes that, because SDSU boasts three talented players down low, it owns the best front court in the nation. Yahoo! Sports analyst and former Nevada-Las Vegas star Greg Anthony said via Twitter that the Aztecs could have the best grouping of big men in the nation, and ESPN's Sean Farnham, who played at UCLA, placed the trio among his top five.

In 1 1/2 seasons playing together, the unit has shown a remarkable consistency to overwhelm opponents on both ends of the floor. They are the core of a team that currently owns a national-best 20-game win streak and is 45-9 since the beginning of last season.

Whether SDSU's forwards are as good as their press clippings won't be fully realized until March, when the school attempts to win its first-ever game in the NCAA tournament. But White can assure you of this ---- having practiced against Leonard and Thomas daily ---- he's happy to be wearing the same red and black uniform.

"I'm just glad that they're on my team," White said. "Kawhi just has a knack for the ball. He gets every rebound. Malcolm's starting to do that, too, and he's helping us a lot.

"It would be a pain in the butt to go against them."

Why the trio is receiving acclaim is no secret.

Defensively, Leonard, Thomas and White present challenges galore for opponents as they routinely change the angles of shot attempts, have the ability to guard almost anyone on the court and can make up ground in no time because of their speed.

On the offensive end, they offer consistent scoring, high-percentage shots and the capacity to repeatedly grab their own misses. And there's no shortage of passing, either.

Leonard is the blue-chipper of the bunch.

The Riverside King High product is easily the school's top NBA prospect since Michael Cage played on Montezuma Mesa in the mid-1980s. With all the physical tools necessary, the 6-foot-7, 225-pound Leonard has been a dominant force since he stepped on campus last season.

Already the first freshman ever to be honored first-team All-Mountain West Conference, Leonard is averaging 15.7 points per game and 10.3 rebounds this season. He has 30 career double-doubles in 53 games and leads the team with 29 steals. He also is second with 50 assists and has been asked by coach Steve Fisher to guard players one through five. And if his physical attributes weren't enough, Leonard also is considered to be the hardest worker on the team.

"His passion and his work ethic make him a top-20 player in the country," Farnham said.

Farnham calls Thomas "the X factor" because of his dynamic passing ability in the post. While he only has 43 assists, Thomas "probably has the most hockey passes in the country ---- the pass that leads to the pass," Farnham said.

A strong post player who is making 57 percent of his shots, Thomas ---- who is averaging 11.9 points and 8.1 rebounds ---- is an even bigger presence on the defensive end.

His long arms create havoc for opponents looking for easy baskets as he forces many to alter their shots. With 42 blocked shots and at least 12 games remaining, Thomas already is within 10 blocks of last season's total, when he finished second in the MWC. Fisher considers him one of the primary reasons SDSU is holding opponents to 39.6 percent shooting from the field, a figure that ranks 38th out of 315 Division I schools.

Then there's White, whom point guard D.J. Gay calls a "gazelle" because of his speed up and down the court. Similar to Leonard, White's defense is highly regarded, as he has been assigned to guard anyone and everyone.

White, the MWC freshman of the year in 2007-08, is quick around the basket on the offensive end and has a knack for making tough shots look easy, Gay said.

White ---- who is averaging 9.7 points and 3.4 rebounds ---- is a 61.2 percent career shooter.

"I can't think of any teams that can score with the consistency they do, rebound like they do and is long and athletic," Frieder said. "There's a lot (of teams) that have one or two players but not three with consistency."

But Fisher knows that having talent and getting those players to mesh are separate concepts. And that's what has impressed him the most.

Instead of being worried about who's handling the ball, players instead say they're focused on making defensive stops because those translate to easy buckets in transition. Many times this season, Fisher has credited his players for their unselfish play ---- that egos aren't getting in the way of winning.

"That's a credit to their moms and dads," Fisher said. "From the get-go, they said, 'the team, the team, the team,' and have truly practiced it. The ball doesn't stick. It's nice to see."

Thomas and White attributed the team's unselfish nature to off-the-court bonding. Because they like each other, players said they have spent extra time trying to learn each other's games so they can complement each other on the floor.

"It's amazing to play with two guys that are so athletic and so unselfish," Thomas said. "We spent a lot of time with each other. We all like each other. We call each other brothers."

"We just have good chemistry."

It wasn't always that way on the court.

Fisher said his team went through a maturation period early in the 2009-10 season, as Leonard adjusted to life as a freshman and Thomas ---- a transfer from Pepperdine ---- readjusted to the rigors of Division I basketball. The team's growing pains resulted in losses in two very winnable road games ---- at Pacific and Arizona State ---- and a blowout loss at Saint Mary's.

But as they played more often, Leonard said, they began to figure each other out. This season is just a by-product of their experience.

"A few games before conference started (last season), we started to click," he said. "This year, we just came in knowing what do. We know what each of us can do, what our go-to moves are, where we like the ball ---- that's making us play well as a group."

Now that they're headed in the right direction, White warns, look out.

"We know each other, and we know each other on the court," White said. "We know that anybody on the team can take over the game. I think we're doing a good job of sharing the ball. Everybody knows that defense is going to win, not offense. Everybody touches the ball the same and when somebody's hot, we try to get them hotter."

"Like I said, I'm just glad that they're on my team."

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### Aztecs are thriving despite dearth of resources

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 23, 2011

San Diego State opened its Mountain West Conference schedule with a win at Texas Christian on Jan. 5, and the following day it stayed in Fort Worth to practice. TCU allowed the Aztecs to use its dedicated practice facility, the Ed and Rae Schollmaier Basketball Complex.

There were two regulation courts with the TCU logo at center court and "Horned Frogs" in purple lettering across the baseline, six baskets, scoreboards at either end, locker rooms, weight rooms, video rooms, administrative offices. When SDSU's manager noticed one of the balls was a little underinflated, he walked to the side of the court, where an electric pump with a yellow cord was attached to the wall.

A few players commented on how warm it felt.

"You're just used to practicing in Peterson Gym, where it's, like, 14 degrees," an Aztecs assistant coach joked. "This is just a normal temperature people live and

work at."

Practice ended and the players left for Dallas-Fort Worth Airport and their flight to Salt Lake City for a weekend game at Utah. It was back to reality.

Reality: Stuffed into seats 21 D, E and F on American Airlines flight 1925 were Brian Carlwell, Mehdi Cheriet and Kawhi Leonard.

That's 6-foot-11, 300 pounds; 6-9, 225; and 6-7, 225.

It is what has made this season all the more magical, all the more astonishing, that the Aztecs have achieved a No. 6 ranking in both major polls (that likely will climb into the Top 5 next week) and a 20-0 record at a school without many of the resources of their newfound brethren in the upper class, even the middle class, of college basketball.

Most top programs have a sparkling new practice facility or have broken ground on one; have a healthy allotment for road-team guarantees that pads the non-conference schedule with winnable home games; have a coaching staff salary budget in the \$2 million neighborhood; have a charter plane filled with the aroma of leather seats and freshly baked chocolate chip cookies gassed up and ready to go for road trips.

SDSU has none of that.

It practices in antiquated Peterson Gym, or on an undersized court at the student rec center, when Viejas Arena isn't available. It played more road games in November and December than anyone else in the Top 25.

Its coaches are grossly underpaid compared to many of their counterparts.

It has chartered a flight once during the regular season in Fisher's 12 years at Montezuma Mesa.

"It is incredible what Steve Fisher has done, absolutely incredible," says Steve Lappas, the former Villanova coach who is now a CBS television analyst for Mountain West Conference games. "He's doing this with resources closer to maybe the Patriot League or the Big Sky (conferences).

"Let me tell you, if I'm taking a job at a program that wants to compete at a high level, I'm asking for all those things. I'm asking about the practice facility. I'm asking about the assistant coaches salaries. I want at least four 'buy' games every season. I want to charter. Those are all such important factors, and he doesn't have them.

"Absolutely incredible."

Fisher is reluctant to discuss the relative dearth of basketball resources compared to most Top 50 or even Top 100 programs, partly because he's in the middle of the season and has other concerns — most immediately, finding a way to stop Jimmer Fredette in Wednesday night's game at No. 9 BYU — and partly because he is sensitive to the budget stresses at a state university during a recession. And partly, no doubt, because he is constantly harping on his players that there is no room for excuses or complaining in basketball.

"I think everyone just assumes that, you know, you're in California and you have everything out there, but we don't," said Carlwell, who spent his first two college seasons stretching his legs on charter flights at Illinois. "You do what you can with what you have. I think people can appreciate that type of story."

The basketball cognoscenti have, marveling at SDSU's rise to prominence without the tools to recruit, teach and maximize their potential to win. But they also wonder whether the Aztecs can maintain this level of success with a barren tool shed, not to mention the looming departure of three and possibly four starters.

SDSU Athletic Director Jim Sterk says he is aware of the resource gap and has discussed the issue with Fisher. He also says the recent \$5 million pledge by local businessman Ron Fowler, ostensibly for football, can be used for other athletic department needs.

"It's going to be a lot harder (to keep winning) without all that stuff," Lappas says. "You have to maximize your opportunities when the getting's good. Now's the time to keep it going.

"Because if it slips, it's a lot tougher to get it back than it is to sustain it once you're already there."

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**Aztecs get Jimmured by BYU**By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 27, 2011

One of the 5,000 white-clad maniacs sitting in the BYU student section at the Marriott Center on Wednesday night had a handmade sign.

"Jimmer's points," it said, and each time Cougars guard Jimmer Fredette scored the student would dutifully draw another line with a black marker. The idea was to keep a running tally and hold it up for all to see.

One problem: It's hard to hold up a sign when you're constantly writing on it.

As the final seconds clicked off on San Diego State's magical 20-0 record, a 71-58 loss to No. 9 BYU in what had to be one of the loudest atmospheres in college basketball history, the fourth-ranked Aztecs were serenaded by 22,700 in full voice.

You got Jimmured, you got Jimmured.

They'll be hearing it in their sleep.

There were 43 marks on the student's sign, but the more impressive number might be this: 60.6.

That's the percent of BYU's points that the 6-foot-2 senior from Glens Falls, N.Y., scored. The rest of the Cougars scored 28.

"As good a player as I've ever coached against," said SDSU Steve Fisher, who's 65 and in his 31st season of college basketball.

"He's good," said D.J. Gay, one of three different Aztecs who tried guarding him. "He's pretty good."

So the zero in the loss column becomes a one, and the No. 4 next to San Diego State will undoubtedly be bigger when the new polls are issued Monday. Top-ranked Ohio State (21-0) remains the lone undefeated team in Division I.

"We just have to get back in the gym and get back to work," forward Malcolm Thomas said. "I think this will be good for us. There was a lot of pressure being undefeated. I don't think it got to us, but I think this will motivate us to work harder."

Tempo was a huge key for the Aztecs, not allowing BYU to get its vaunted fast break rolling and push the game into the 80s or 90s. And in that regard they did reasonably well, leading 31-30 at halftime.

The game turned midway through the second half, the very point when the Aztecs usually smell blood and bury their opponents.

This time, it was BYU which swayed the momentum with a flurry of points and, perhaps, some help from the three-man Mountain West Conference officiating crew. Not that you could have heard their whistles even if they blew them, the Marriott Center was so ridiculously loud, but it wasn't until 10:25 left that BYU had its first foul of the second half.

No whistles meant no rest, no break in the flow, and the team from sea level finally couldn't catch its breath in the rarefied air of 4,682 feet, and a 38-35 lead became a 52-46 deficit. That doesn't seem like much, but in a game this tight — there were seven ties and 15 lead changes — it was enough separation to make a difference.

Another problem: The Aztecs called timeouts 12 seconds apart with 5½ minutes left, one when Billy White couldn't inbound the ball and another in a scramble for a loose ball. That left them with only one to stop the onslaught.

"Then we miss some easy shots and six (points) becomes 10," Fisher said, "and they weren't going to let us back in."

Kawhi Leonard had a monster game with 22 points and 15 rebounds, made even more impressive when you consider he vomited several times during the day and received intravenous fluids to treat an hour before tipoff.

But 31.3 percent shooting (10-of-32) in the second half, including 2-of-13 behind the three-point arc, was too much to overcome. It was worst shooting half of the season for the Aztecs, and the first time in 26 games they had lost after leading at halftime. Going nine-plus minutes with a single basket didn't help.

"We missed easy baskets that we normally make," said Gay, who was 0-of-7 and finished with two points (but no turnovers) in 37 minutes. "We turned the ball over in silly ways, too."

And then there was the issue of Fredette.

He drained threes from the Nevada state line, took a hard dribble inside the line and made lean-in twos, hit floaters in the lane, drove into traffic and somehow converted contested layups, got fouled and made his free throws.

Gay tried guarding him, White tried guarding him, Chase Tapley tried guarding him, all with equal futility.

Fredette had 20 by halftime and 34 midway through the second half. He reached 40 with 1:55 left. He shot 14-of-24 overall, 5-of-8 on threes, 10-of-11 from the line.

His most impressive stretch came on either side of halftime, when he had 24 of BYU's 27 points, including 17 straight at one juncture. He also had 14 of 17 points in the critical second-half stretch when the Aztecs went from up three to down six.

It was the fifth time he has dropped 40 on an opponent, but the difference is that in the previous four BYU scored an average of 98 points and Fredette's contribution amounted to 46.7 percent. To score 60 percent of your team's points is beyond staggering.

"I was making shots again tonight," Fredette said, "and I was able to get in a rhythm."

As one shot after another went in, the kid furiously scribbled on his sign. Not far away, another student held up his sign that needed no updating:

"Fredette about it!"

**NOTES**

The Aztecs host Wyoming on Saturday at 7 p.m. at Viejas Arena, which is sold out for the rest of the season ... TJ Fredette, Jimmer's older brother and a New York rapper, performed a short show for the student section 90 minutes before tipoff. He did two songs he wrote about his brother: "Amazing," and "Sequel to amazing." ... The highlight video for BYU's pregame introductions was not shown on the permanent video board but on giant sheets lowered to the floor on all four sides of the scoreboard ... The game matched Top 4 teams in the computerized RPI (ratings percentage index). BYU entered the night at No. 1, SDSU was No. 4 ...

More signs: "Don't expect a good night's sleep at this Marriott," "Jimmer Fredette University," "Jimmer Jimmer Chicken Dinner," "And you thought Jimmer was sick last year ..." (Fredette scored 33 at SDSU last season, with mononucleosis) ... There have been nine games this college season matching teams in the Associated Press Top 10. The team with the lower ranking has won five ... Leonard's double-double was the 31st of his career and moves him into second place all-time at SDSU behind Michael Cage ... Leonard now has seven 20-point games this season, all away from home.

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**How Steve Fisher got back on top**By Doug Gottlieb | ESPN.com  
January 27, 2011

For some, the emergence of the San Diego State Aztecs this season could be seen as a shock. It wasn't long ago that the Aztecs didn't register at all on the college hoops radar. Now here they stand No. 4 in both polls and -- per Joe Lunardi -- could end up as a No. 1 seed in the Dance. SDSU has virtually no basketball history to speak of before the 12-year run of Steve Fisher & Co., so how did this once-unnoticed program reach the upper echelon of college hoops?

If you take a look at San Diego State's 2010-11 roster and how the Aztecs landed their players, you can start to see how SDSU has been built into a power in Southern California.

Kawhi Leonard: California Player of the Year -- but lightly regarded as a PF option, so no Pac-10 schools offered him a scholarship. Leonard might have the biggest hands of any player his size in college hoops and is a great rebounder, but several Pac-10 coaches were not convinced his game would translate to their level. They were wrong.

Malcolm Thomas: San Diego High School product who was part of a package deal to go to Pepperdine and play for Vance Walberg. When Walberg was fired, the high-scoring frosh landed at San Diego City College, then stayed home at SDSU.

Billy White: A fairly well recruited player who is a bit of a tweener out of Las Vegas; a good veteran scorer who has gotten better every season.

D.J. Gay: A lightly recruited scoring lead guard from L.A.'s Sun Valley, an outstanding student who is allowed to play his game and score more than facilitate. He's also a very confidence-inspiring player.

Tim Shelton: From Bakersfield, Shelton came over with assistant Justin Hutson. He's been a good solid interior rebounder who can score.

Chase Tapley: A solid scoring guard from Sacramento, Tapley is another good find in an under-recruited area of California.

Brian Carlwell: A transfer from Illinois, Carlwell is a big body who gives the Aztecs a legit low-post defender and big body against the few opponents they have faced with size.

Starting to detect a trend? Finding overlooked and cast-off players was only part of the formula -- and the program has been burned by some of those players in the past. But you don't build a program of San Diego State's caliber by simply relying on player talent. With that in mind, here are 10 more keys to the Aztecs' winning equation.

(Before we go any further, in the interest of full disclosure, I should note that my brother, Gregg Gottlieb, was part of the San Diego State basketball staff before leaving for Cal.)

#### Handling transfers

Many schools take transfers, but few, if any, are as successful with them as Fisher's program has been. From Randy Holcomb (Fresno State) -- the first transfer who became a second-round pick of the Philadelphia 76ers -- all the way to Malcolm Thomas (Pepperdine) and James Rahon (Santa Clara), they were all recruited by the staff out of high school, so there is a pre-existing relationship before any recruitment would take place. "We did not have to really call anyone to find out if they were good kids, or good students; we already knew," my brother told me. "In fact, Coach Fisher had told us to recruit everyone, then we would determine which players were going to a school that was too big, or too far for them to be happy. We never had to recruit [a transfer], we simply decided if we wanted him because they all liked our style, location and we had a relationship."

#### Staff

Marvin Menzies, now the coach at New Mexico State, was truly the linchpin in the early recruiting. Menzies was the coach at Santa Monica Junior College before landing as an assistant at SDSU, where he used his ties to Los Angeles to get the Aztecs in on players early and create ties regardless of whether they would land the player. Menzies helped my brother get the director of basketball operations job, and, with Jim Thome, who was the coach at University City High in San Diego, they spread throughout the state of California and began gaining traction. After Menzies left, Fisher turned to Gary Grant, a former stud Michigan player and NBA starter, then Mark Hughes, a former captain and All-Big Ten center Fisher recruited to Michigan, as replacements. Even now, with Menzies at NMSU and Gregg Gottlieb at Cal, Hutson has become a dynamic force in Bakersfield and Riverside, where the team landed Leonard. Brian Dutcher, Fisher's associate head coach, has been his right-hand man for the entire 12 years and has provided consistency. And it should also be noted that Fisher's allowance for his coaches to flourish has benefited the program.

#### Work with flaws

San Diego State is a solid school. It's not great; it's not a diploma mill, but in the landscape of California, it is not UCLA, Stanford or Cal. There are players who want to stay close to home, players who simply need extra work on their poor academic profile.

Take Mountain West Conference career scoring leader Brandon Heath. He attended night school for a year after graduating from Westchester to become eligible to play at SDSU, which never bailed on him and eventually landed him. Heath was not only a prolific and transcendent player but also graduated in three years.

#### Use the aura of the 'Fab Five'

Although most of the kids they are recruiting now do not remember the Fab Five, when Fisher first got to SDSU, the coolest team in the memory bank of

many high school talents was that elite squad from Michigan. Former stud Aeric Sanders actually asked Fisher to autograph his Fab Five book on Sanders' home visit. "I knew we had him then," Fisher told his staff.

#### Find players who fit

Take Gay, the current starting guard: He was set to land at UC Irvine as a very good student, but Fisher and staff knew they needed another point guard, and one who could score because Richie Williams, then the starter, was tiny and a decent-but-not-great scorer. It's a role that allowed Gay to step in and contribute in the 2008-09 season and has allowed Williams not to press and do too much.

#### Stick with your promises

The Aztecs staff promised to play players at their desired position, then stood by the promise. Holcomb, their first big "get," wanted to be a shooting forward after transferring from Fresno State. Oklahoma and others saw him as a more natural power forward, but Fisher promised and stood by it, playing him at the wing when he came to campus. He only later moved him to PF for his senior season, and Holcomb flourished there.

#### Build on the success of former players

This is nothing new to other schools, either, but State has done very well with it. Take Leonard. He is from Riverside, MLK High School, but he was influenced by Marcus Slaughter (J.W. North), who was SDSU's most recent transcendent talent. (He left for the NBA a year early. Otherwise, the Aztecs might have had a season like this four years ago.)

#### Play a likable style

Fisher has changed his offense through the years and now runs more isolation sets and makes rebounding the point of emphasis. He is not a browbeater in shot selection or pace, and that seems to help the perception of the program on the recruiting front.

#### Facilities

When Fisher arrived in San Diego, Cox Arena had just opened. Although the building is not an NBA building, it is unique in that it is built inside the old Aztec Bowl football stadium, and it is very loud when full.

When SDSU opened the building, USC had not yet broken ground on the Galen Center and thus the Aztecs had the best building of any Division I school in California, and maybe all of the West Coast. Additionally, hosting the NCAA tournament has helped promote the city, the stunning weather and the facilities. Several transfers, including Carlwell, played at Cox in the NCAA tournament. It acts like an unofficial visit for unhappy players.

#### Take JC transfers

Like four-year transfers, junior college kids really do not have anywhere else to go, so they are often more focused on making it work at their new school. Additionally, they are more physically mature than high school players, and the JC route can help players get their academics in order. If you know how to treat such players, this can be a valuable avenue for a building program.

So much of college basketball is about fit and timing. The fit was perfect when Steve Fisher was hired. He was available and not terribly expensive and had the cachet of being the "Fab Five" coach. The timing was perfect with the new arena. Long Beach State -- a program that frequently lured the same bounce-back or transfer talents SDSU has attracted -- was down, and Utah was at its peak, helping the reputation of the fledgling Mountain West.

The Aztecs have made some mistakes and suffered some setbacks, but, by following these principles, they have the best accumulation of talent and substance on the West Coast.

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### Thomas takes blame for SDSU loss at BYU

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 29, 2011

The BYU students were still celebrating on the court, the chants of "Jimmer, Jimmer, Jimmer" still echoing through the Marriott Center, when San Diego State senior forward Malcolm Thomas broke the dejected silence of the visitors' locker room.

"It's my fault," Thomas told his teammates then.

"They told me it wasn't," Thomas said Friday, recounting the postgame conver-

sation. "But I honestly felt like it was. I could have done more."

As recently as three weeks ago, the 6-foot-9 Thomas was playing the finest basketball of his collegiate career, dominating teams inside, dunking, rebounding, blocking shots, changing shots, getting opposing posts into foul trouble. He had 18 points and 10 rebounds in the Mountain West Conference opener at TCU, 17 and 14 at Utah, 14 and 16 against UNLV. He was named MWC Player of the Week for the third time this season. He ran his streak of double-figure scoring games to nine. He raised his season shooting percentage to .579.

And since:

Averages of 8.0 points and 7.3 rebounds in the past three games, while shooting 36 percent (9-of-25) and twice committing four fouls.

The BYU game, with all its conference and national implications, was the final straw for Thomas, and he vowed afterward — "It won't happen again," is how he put it — to return to his previous form beginning Saturday night when the No. 4 Aztecs (20-1, 5-1) host Wyoming at Viejas Arena.

It also helps that the Cowboys (8-12, 1-5) have been a mess lately, losing four straight by a combined 65 points and playing with little depth inside. Afam Muojeke, a 6-foot-8 junior, had knee surgery this week and is out for the season; 6-10 center Adam Waddell is not yet 100 percent after Achilles' tendinitis.

But Thomas' problems admittedly are as much between the ears as between the sidelines.

"When my shots aren't falling or other things aren't going my way, I tend to hang my head a little bit," Thomas said. "It's just frustration. But it can't happen any more, because I know how it affects me and how it affects my teammates."

Two things have changed: One is that, after Thomas torched teams early in the conference season, opponents are committed to clogging the paint with sagging zones or automatic double teams whenever he touches the ball in the post. The other is the MWC referees appear to be allowing more interior contact, and Thomas has been visibly rattled when there's no whistle after getting hammered on a missed shot.

"They're playing him like a pro," point guard D.J. Gay said. "Every time he's getting double-teamed no matter what. That's because no one can play him one-on-one. It's something he has to get used to, and it's changed his comfort zone. He has to learn how to deal with that."

The mea culpa in Provo?

"Of course it wasn't his fault," Gay said. "Sure, he could have done some things better, but we all could have. It just shows what kind of player he is, what kind of heart he has, that he's willing to put this team on his back and carry it."

Added Aztecs coach Steve Fisher: "That's why I love Malcolm so much, because he's not afraid to bare his soul to anybody. He'll sometimes to a fault want to accept responsibility. That's why he has a chance to really be good, because he's willing to reveal his blemishes and work on them and get better."

"But it's a double-edged sword. I also told him: 'Malcolm, you're too good not to be on your game.'"

#### NOTES

The color analyst on tonight's telecast on The Mtn: former USD head coach Brad Holland, who left as a UC Santa Barbara assistant last spring to become chief professional officer of the Carlsbad Boys and Girls Club ... SDSU is asking fans to wear black today, and the first 2,500 people through the door will receive "Aztec Black out" T-shirts ... Coaches will wear sneakers and some Aztecs players will wear pink Nikes as part of the national Coaches vs. Cancer campaign ... Wyoming leads the all-time series 37-30, but SDSU has won four of the last six ... Sophomore Desmar Jackson leads Wyoming at 15.2 points per game, and junior point guard JayDee Luster (Hoover High) is averaging 6.8 points and 3.6 assists ... Freshman guard Joe Hudson (Escondido High) has played in 12 games and is averaging 2.2 points in 8.8 minutes ... The Cowboys have four foreign players on their roster: two from France, and one each from Senegal and Mexico.

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#### Aztecs hangover? Apparently not

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
January 30, 2011

Maybe it was the 14-0 blitz to open the game.

Or French bench-warmer Mehdi Cheriet draining a turn-around, fall-away jumper in the lane 17 seconds after entering the game and the San Diego State student section breaking into "Frere Jacques." Or the lob to Billy White for a ferocious two-handed dunk with his elbows over the rim. Or the consecutive blocks by Brian Carlwell on a 6-foot-10 post. Or the Aztecs making seven of their first 10 three-point attempts.

Or Kawhi Leonard and Malcolm Thomas combining for two points in the first half, and SDSU still leading by 31.

Or the 40-point margin moments into the second half.

Wyoming coach Heath Schroyer stood in front of his bench, arms crossed, watching it all, watching another block, another steal, another dunk, another three make the net dance, another fast break from the guys wearing metallic pink Nikes, then turned around and mouthed a single word. "Wow."

Apparently, there's no SDSU hangover from Wednesday's loss at BYU.

The No. 4 Aztecs got the perfect slump-buster in Wyoming and, as the student section kept chanting, showed no mercy, blasting the Cowboys 96-57 on Saturday night to the utter delight (and perhaps relief) of another Viejas Arena sell-out.

The 39-point margin is the largest by SDSU in the 12-year history of the Mountain West Conference. The 17 threes are a school record (eight different players made them).

"They're really, really good," Schroyer said afterward. "I was in the league as an assistant when Utah went to the Final Four (in 1998), and they're better than (Utah was). They shoot like that, I don't know if anybody in the country can beat them, let alone in this building."

Earlier in the day BYU lost at New Mexico, meaning the Aztecs (21-1, 6-1) are tied again with the Cougars (20-2, 6-1) atop the MWC standings. Meaning: The Aztecs still control their own destiny in terms of the regular-season conference title.

Given a second life, they looked very much like a team not interesting in wasting it.

Malcolm Thomas batted the opening tip to the 6-8 White, who found himself one-on-one with 5-9 Wyoming point guard JayDee Luster for an easy layup and 2-0 lead after four seconds.

The rest of the game was just as much of a mismatch.

The next five Aztecs possessions went like this: White floater, Chase Tapley three-pointer, Tapley dunk, D.J. Gay three-pointer, Tapley lob to White for a two-handed dunk.

It was 16-9, then 33-9. It was 44-22, then 53-22 at the half.

Four minutes into the second half, it was 64-24 and the game had degenerated into open gym at Serra Mesa Rec, with about as much defense as an NBA All-Star Game, with a two-pass possession being a rarity, with guys jacking up all kinds of shots from all kinds of area codes, with SDSU freshmen Jamaal Franklin trying a between-the-legs windmill dunk (which he missed).

It was about the only thing that didn't go right. The Cowboys (8-13, 1-6) closed to 29 points. The Aztecs pushed it to 41.

"It's tough losing like that for my homecoming," said Luster, a prep legend at nearby Hoover High. "It's kind of embarrassing. But they're a good team. They're ranked No. 4 in the country for a reason."

"I tip my hat when guys are coming off the bench who aren't really in the scouting report and they can play — guys who could start for any other team in the league."

All 12 Aztecs who got on the floor scored, led by a career-high 24 from Tapley (on 10-of-15 shooting). Carlwell had eight points and a career-high 10 rebounds. Cheriet had a season-high eight points and three rebounds in 15 minutes. Gay rebounded from a 0-of-7 performance against BYU by going 4-of-8 behind the

arc.

Or there was this mind-boggling stat: 2.

That's how many points Thomas and Leonard, arguably SDSU's two best players, each scored.

"The most impressive thing to me was 20 assists in 35 baskets – our unselfishness," Coach Steve Fisher said. "One time we were trying to run a play for Kawhi, and he said, 'Don't worry about running a play for me. We're scoring every time and let's just move the ball.'"

"That's how you have to play, but a lot of teams are not able to play that way. We have a lot of people who want to win."

The smiles won't last long, though, at least not on the faces on the Aztecs coaches. Up next, on Wednesday night in Fort Collins, Colo., is a scary Colorado State team that won again Saturday to improve to 5-2 in conference. Or put it this way: The Rams are no Cowboys.

But at least Fisher won't have to worry about his team being mired in a funk from its last trip into the mountains.

"I think all of us were just a little bit concerned would we come out with the edge we needed," he said, "and we did."

One word: Wow.

#### NOTES

The Aztecs wore the pink sneakers as part of the national Coaches vs. Cancer campaign ... The previous most-lopsided MWC victory by SDSU was also against Wyoming, last year's 31-point margin here ... SDSU extended its win streak against unranked opponents to 30 ... After vowing to return to his early January form, Thomas took just three shots and scored two points. But he was a dominant factor defensively, blocking six shots (and changing a half-dozen more) in a mere 23 minutes to go with three assists, one steal and no turnovers ...

Wyoming freshman Joe Hudson (Escondido High) played 12 minutes and finished with two points. Luster had 10 points, four rebounds and four assists ... Wyoming shot 29.7 percent (19-of-64). The season low by an Aztecs opponent was 29.2 by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo here on Dec. 13 ... Wyoming, which has lost five straight, now returns home to face No. 9 BYU. Said Schroyer: "This league is very unforgiving." ...

If you see an inordinately long line outside Viejas Arena in the early hours of Monday morning, it is students getting tickets to the Feb. 5 (TCU) and Feb. 8 (Utah) home games. Distribution begins at 7:30 a.m. ... The Aztecs learned their opponent in the Mountain West-Missouri Valley Challenge for next season: Creighton on Nov. 30 at Viejas Arena.

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#### Tapley, Aztecs run away from Wyoming

By Brian Hiro | North County Times  
January 30, 2011

The San Diego State men's basketball team needed mere minutes to declare, loudly and authoritatively, that there would be no hangover from its first loss of the season.

Billy White streaked for a layup off the opening tip Saturday night and gave a military salute as the student section launched into its usual pregame chant, "I Believe That We Will Win." White hit a floater on the baseline. Malcolm Thomas sandwiched two demonstrative blocks around a Chase Tapley 3-pointer, the second of them initiating a fast break that ended with a Tapley dunk.

By the time Tapley found White for a thunderous alley-oop jam at the 16:26 mark, another sellout crowd at Viejas Arena was in delirium, Wyoming had already burned two timeouts, and the white-hot Aztecs had scored the first 14 points en route to a 96-57 dismantling of the severely overmatched Cowboys.

The scorching start, and one of the most complete all-around performances of the season, could hardly have been a better way for San Diego State to chase the

sour taste left by its setback at the hands of Jimmer Fredette and Brigham Young on Wednesday. That 71-58 defeat had left the No. 4-ranked Aztecs (21-1, 6-1 Mountain West Conference) as the second-to-last team in Division I to suffer a blemish on their record, but if they maintain their level of play from Saturday, they won't absorb too many more.

"The loss (at BYU) was a self-check," SDSU point guard D.J. Gay said. "It let us know we can be beat if we don't come out and play our game. If we would have beat BYU, I don't know if we would have come out with this high energy against Wyoming."

Pity the poor opponent if the Aztecs come out with more energy. They set a school record by sinking 17 3-pointers (in 33 attempts, with eight different players making at least one), they shot 53.8 percent overall (while holding Wyoming to 29.7), and their 39-point margin of victory was their largest ever in a Mountain West game.

"They're the best team that we've played in the four years that I have been here," Wyoming coach Heath Schroyer said. "I was an assistant in this league when Utah went to the Final Four (in 1998). It all depends on their seed, but they are better than (the Utes were). They are really, really good. When they make perimeter shots, I don't know if anyone in the country can beat them, let alone in this building."

SDSU overwhelmed the Cowboys with a display of enviable depth that saw Tapley explode for a career-high 24 points while Kawhi Leonard and Thomas – two of the team's three leading scorers – were needed for only two points apiece. At one point, Leonard pulled coach Steve Fisher aside and said not to bother calling plays to get him the ball. Such was the effectiveness and unselfishness of the Aztecs' offense Saturday.

"I made the comment at halftime that when probably our two best players had two points between them and they're happy about it, you've got a good team," Fisher said. "We've got good people who want to win."

As an unexpected bonus, the Aztecs took the court after watching New Mexico storm back to upset the No. 9 Cougars, meaning that the rivals are back tied atop the MWC at 6-1.

"We were not so much cheering, but we knew we had another chance to win the conference," said senior center Brian Carlwell, who had eight points, 10 rebounds and three blocks off the bench. "We've got a new focus again."

After woeful shooting led to their downfall at BYU, the Aztecs were unconscious against Wyoming, especially in the first half. During one sequence, they made six 3-pointers in seven possessions (by five different players, including reserve forwards Mehdi Cheriet and Tim Shelton) to stretch a 33-14 lead to 53-22. Tapley was the offensive instigator, hitting 10-of-15 shots and 3-of-6 from long range to eclipse his previous career best by seven points.

"They have everything they need," Schroyer said, "to make a deep run to try to win a national championship."

#### Aztecs notes

San Diego State announced Saturday that it will host Creighton next season in the third-annual Mountain West-Missouri Valley Challenge. The game will be Nov. 30 at Viejas Arena. ... Wyoming freshman G Joe Hudson, a former Escondido High star, scored two points in 12 minutes. ... Washington Nationals ace Stephen Strasburg, the former San Diego State star, was introduced at halftime.

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#### Call timeout? SDSU's Gay hits game-winner instead

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 3, 2011

Sometimes the best timeout is the one not called.

San Diego State coach Steve Fisher had two timeouts left, and the game was tied, and there were 10 seconds to go. The referees took a quick glance in his direction, assuming he wanted to use one.

Fisher didn't.

"Day in, day out, Coach pulls me aside and tells me, 'You control this team; you lead this team,'" Gay said. 'He puts so much confidence in me that it's hard not to have confidence in myself.'"

– Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Call timeout? SDSU's Gay hits game-winner instead")

He has D.J. Gay.

It didn't matter that Gay was having, by his own admission, "a bad offensive game," that he had made just 2-of-8 shots and had four total points, that he hadn't scored at all for the past 18 minutes. Gay was taking, and making, the last shot.

"I definitely want that shot," Gay said. "That's just the game of basketball for me. ... When Coach didn't call timeout, I knew what to do."

Gay's step-back 18-footer from the left side was a dagger through 7,353 hearts in Moby Arena, providing the No. 7 Aztecs a 56-54 victory against Colorado State that ranks among the biggest of the season and puts them in prime position for a high seed in the NCAA Tournament next month.

"The people who don't know our league and don't know about Colorado State might say, 'Man, that was too close,'" Fisher said. "But they're a good team. This is a big win for us. This is a huge win for us. I told our team before: 'You have to understand how important a game this is for us.'"

It gave the Aztecs (22-1, 7-1) a two-game cushion over Colorado State (15-7, 5-3) in the Mountain West Conference and kept them abreast of eighth-ranked BYU (21-2, 7-1), which squeaked out a win Wednesday at Wyoming. It also marked the end of the Aztecs' toughest stretch in the conference season, with five of the final eight games now at home and the only top-tier road game remaining at UNLV.

And it gave them something else necessary for March Madness: confidence they can win tight games.

This is an Aztecs team that has trailed only once all season inside the final seven minutes and had just two previous games go down to the final possession.

SDSU twice had chances to create some separation against the relentless Rams and couldn't, blowing an eight-point lead late in the first half and a 52-46 lead with 6:30 left. CSU tied it at 52 with 4:21 to go, but couldn't score again until Travis Franklin muscled in a layup with 10.1 seconds on the clock.

That made it 54-54, and Fisher had a decision.

"I thought about taking (a timeout)," he said. "Then I said, 'Maybe, you know, we can get it and run before they set up their defense.' And I knew one thing: That when D.J. has the ball at the end of the game, we weren't going to do something foolish."

Added CSU guard Dorian Green: "That makes it a lot harder (to defend). It's just chaos."

Gay took the inbounds pass from Malcolm Thomas and raced across midcourt.

Nine, eight ...

CSU's Andy Ogide and Dorian Green tried to double team him.

Seven, six ...

Gay avoided it by bouncing left and faking like he was driving to the basket.

Five, four ...

Gay stepped back and launched a fall-away jumper from just inside the three-point line.

Three, two ...

Swish.

There were 1.8 seconds left, and the Rams, out of timeouts, heaved a three-quarter court pass, which the alert Gay intercepted and cradled as time expired in a suddenly silent Moby Arena.

It was also Gay, remember, who calmly made two free throws with 23 seconds

left in the quarterfinals of the MWC Tournament last year to beat CSU 72-71.

"Our guys know what to do," Miles said of defending the final 10 seconds. "D.J. Gay made a good play. It's not like he came down and shot a layup. We got the ball stopped. He went in and made a great one-one-one play, made a nice inside-out move and hit a jumper fading away.

"It wasn't like he was just out there playing horse."

The Rams out-rebounded SDSU, had more assists, had fewer turnovers, made more free throws and won the battle of big men. CSU's Ogide had 18 points and 12 rebounds to six points, six rebounds and five turnovers for Thomas.

The difference was yet another double-double from Kawhi Leonard (12 points, 15 rebounds); a season-high 15 points off the bench from James Rahon on just seven shots; and a lockdown defensive effort, holding the Rams to 36.5 percent shooting overall and just 33 percent in the second half.

And, of course, a 6-foot, 170-pound senior point guard.

"Day in, day out, Coach pulls me aside and tells me, 'You control this team; you lead this team,'" Gay said. "He puts so much confidence in me that it's hard not to have confidence in myself."

#### Notes

The temperature outside Moby Arena on Wednesday night: minus-3 degrees Fahrenheit, with a wind chill of minus-13 ... Moby wasn't sold out. It holds 8,745 ... It was SDSU's eighth straight win against CSU and CSU's 13th straight loss against a ranked opponent ... It was the 33rd straight time the Aztecs have won when leading with five minutes to go ... The teams combined to score four points in the final two minutes and commit four turnovers ...

Gay had another turnover-free game, his eighth of the season. In the last five games and 178 minutes, he has just two turnovers — an absolutely staggering statistic for a point guard ... Another thing that bailed out the Aztecs: going 8-of-10 from the line ... Rahon has at least one three-pointer in nine straight games and is 8-of-14 in his last three games ...

CSU guard Wes Eikmeier suited up after missing the last two games with a foot injury, but he didn't start and had no points in 10 minutes ... The win ended an ignominious streak by this group of SDSU seniors. The previous four times in MWC play they had a blowout win (by 20-plus points) followed by a road game, they lost the road game.

## 82

### SDSU quietly building power

By Jerry Meyer | Rivals.com  
February 4, 2011

Mountain West Conference teams aren't accustomed to hosting conference games in February against teams with a No. 6 ranking and one-loss records. Yet, there was San Diego State heading into Colorado State on Wednesday night, in front of a national cable television audience, as one of the best teams in the country.

The Aztecs left Fort Collins, Colo., with their top 10 ranking intact and a 22-1 record after senior D.J. Gay knocked down a game-winning jumper with just seconds left on the clock.

Gay is emblematic of the Aztecs' roster, one filled with players from varied backgrounds, passed over by schools from BCS conferences and coming together to form one of the nation's top teams.

There is no magic formula the Aztecs followed in landing the pieces for this impressive run, according to assistant coach Justin Hutson, SDSU's director of recruiting.

"There's no secret," Hutson told Rivals.com. "We just try to get good players. It's really very simple. We have a mix of high school recruits, junior college players and transfers. We just try to find good players wherever they are. But it's not like

**"Steve Fisher has steadily built San Diego State into a West Coast power - blending a nice mix of high-major transfers, talented jucos and under-the-radar high school prospects to build a championship contender," [Dinos Trigonis] said. 'Another key to this success has been the patience exhibited by both San Diego State's administration after the hire of Fisher over a decade ago.'"**

- Jerry Meyer (*Rivals.com* - "SDSU quietly building power")

we are all about junior college players and transfers. We have four starters who came to us right out of high school.

"We look at our needs for the upcoming year, then start on the West Coast and see who is good enough."

Those four starters out of high school - Gay, Kawhi Leonard, Billy White and Chase Tapley - account for more than 44 points per game for the Aztecs.

Out of the other four main contributors, San Diego product Malcolm Thomas, who was a junior college transfer, averages 11.3 points per game and is the second-leading rebounder behind Leonard. James Rahon, a transfer from Santa Clara, is averaging 7.6 points per game. Brian Carlwell is the only high-major transfer, coming from Illinois, and he only averages 3.9 points in just 10 minutes per game. Tim Shelton is the only other player averaging more than 10 minutes per game, and he came to San Diego State out of high school.

Bottom line is that the program is built upon lightly recruited high school prospects with some transfers sprinkled in.

Gray received little-to-no recruiting attention from the Pac-10. White and Tapley had minimal attention from the Pac-10 and even Leonard, who was ranked a top 50 prospect by Rivals.com, was just a secondary target for Pac-10 schools.

So how was the San Diego State coaching staff able to convince these prospects that they can achieve major success in the Mountain West Conference?

"We start with Coach (Steve) Fisher and his past success and who he is as a person," Hutson said. "He has a history of putting players in the NBA. We have beautiful facilities and great fan support. Our weight room is top-notch, and we have great academic help. And then we get to the university. It is the second-most applied to school in the country."

Fisher, who won a national championship as Michigan's coach in 1989 and coached the Fab Five to a pair of Final Fours, has achieved a status on par with any Pac-10 school during his 12-year tenure with the Aztecs. He's secured his sixth straight 20-win season at SDSU, while Pac-10 hoops have taken a step back the past couple of years.

And the grassroots basketball community on the West Coast has taken notice.

Dinos Trigonis, editor of the scouting report Fullcourt Press and coach of the Belmont Shores travel team, attests to the prominence of both SDSU's basketball program and Fisher.

"Steve Fisher has steadily built San Diego State into a West Coast power - blending a nice mix of high-major transfers, talented jucos and under-the-radar high school prospects to build a championship contender," he said. "Another key to this success has been the patience exhibited by both San Diego State's administration after the hire of Fisher over a decade ago."

Despite the success, it hasn't significantly changed the dynamics of SDSU's recruiting.

"It's hard to see how tangible an effect it has on recruiting," Hutson said. "We definitely get more recognition. We get more calls now. But none of this means we are going to get guys. It helps you get in the door, but it doesn't close any deals. Just because you have recognition, doesn't mean you'll get players."

Even with the exposure this season is bringing to the program, it is doubtful that it will translate into a highly recognized 2011 recruiting class.

The Aztecs have already lost a tough recruiting battle to UCLA for San Diego high school star Norman Powell, who is the No. 59 prospect in the Rivals150. Powell could have been the next version of Leonard. Instead, he will play in the new Pac-12 and SDSU has to keep turning up stones.

"As you know, most of the top guys in the 2011 class are committed," Hutson said. "So having a great season this year can pretty much just help us with transfers for next year."

The Aztecs have already signed forward of Santa Monica Junior College and forward Kevin Young, who is not playing competitive basketball this season but played the previous two years at Loyola Marymount.

Washington State transfer Xavier Thames is also with the team this year and will become eligible next year.

So there are reinforcements on the way, and don't be surprised if the SDSU coaching staff finds an under-recruited high school prospect or two who will become difference-makers for the program down the road.

### 83

#### Aztecs win marred by injuries

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 6, 2011

The first sign that something might be awry was when the lights dimmed for San Diego State's pregame introductions Saturday night at soldout Viejas Arena and the crowd rose to its feet and the music started pumping.

And the Aztecs players just stood there.

They weren't dancing.

They didn't have that usual bounce in their step, and before long it was more like a limp. With 14:40 left in the first half, starting guard Chase Tapley hobbled off the court. Two minutes later, key backup Tim Shelton was hobbling off as well. Neither would return.

About the only good news of the night was that seventh-ranked SDSU was playing Texas Christian, a team that had lost seven straight on the road and nine of 10 overall and left leading scorer Ronnie Moss in Fort Worth due to the dreaded "indefinite suspension" for violation of team rules.

The Aztecs would survive 60-53, pushing their record to 23-1 overall and 8-1 in the Mountain West Conference. They have won 16 straight at home. They have won 32 straight against unranked opponents. They are No. 2 in the computerized RPI rankings.

But all that suddenly seems so fragile, so tenuous.

Just when it looked like nothing could possibly go wrong in this most magical of seasons, with the glow of D.J. Gay's dramatic game-winner at Colorado State still radiating, two of SDSU's top seven players were sitting on the end of the bench wearing red warm-up tops and a protective boot on their feet.

"You can be on Cloud Nine one day, and you can be right back at ground zero the next," a solemn Gay said. "Games like this are definitely a self check. After this win, people are walking out of the locker room and they're not really smiling."

"It's hard to see your teammates go down like that."

Tapley was flying in for an uncontested layup when he collapsed under the basket. He landed on his back, then rolled onto his stomach and winced. Then he grabbed his sprained left ankle.

Shelton came up lame on a rebound skirmish and stood at midcourt while the Aztecs tried to run offense, waiting for a whistle so he could join Tapley in the Viejas Arena training room. His boot was on his right leg and was even bigger, extending to his knee.

SDSU officials merely described Shelton's injury as "right foot." Neither player was made available to the media, and both are scheduled to get X-rays Sunday morning.

The Aztecs appeared rattled by the sudden dose of mortality, content to let the last-place Horned Frogs (10-13, 1-8) keep the tempo just above a crawl and showing so little aggressiveness that they had only a single foul at halftime. TCU led 6-0 to start the game, and it was 24-24 when 5-foot-9 guard Hank Thorns Jr. drained a three-pointer at the shot-clock buzzer about a minute before the half.

Coach Steve Fisher: "I thought we were a little lacking in terms of an edge about us."

Gay: "Something was definitely off. We couldn't quite figure out what it was."

Billy White: "We came out slow tonight. If you want to win this league, you can't do that. We should play every game like it's our last game. We have no excuses."

The Aztecs would lead 28-24 at the half after a bizarre sequence, with the final .4 seconds taking nearly five minutes to play. Gay had a shot blocked out of bounds, and the officials gave the ball to the Horned Frogs, who inbounded and



missed a shot.

The horn sounded, and the teams ran off the floor for halftime.

Except it wasn't halftime yet. Fisher confronted the officials before they could leave, too, noting that they had signaled Gay's shot was knocked out of bounds by a TCU player. They ultimately agreed and summoned both teams back on the floor, much to the chagrin of TCU coach Jim Christian.

SDSU inbounded under its own basket and ran a lob play for Kawhi Leonard, who guided the ball in.

That seemed to energize the Aztecs, and when White made a corner jumper with 9:26 left, they had their first double-digit lead at 42-31. TCU got as close as five with 1:07 left on another trey by Thorns (16 points, eight assists and four rebounds at 5-9), but SDSU calmly ran down the shot clock before Leonard drew a foul and sank both free throws to seal it.

White led the Aztecs with 19 points, his most in two months, and Leonard had his 16th double-double of the season (11 points, 10 rebounds). But the most inspiring effort came from Malcolm Thomas, who broke out of a five-game slump despite a shaky start than included a missed shot and back-to-back traveling violations on SDSU's opening three possessions.

Thomas finished with 11 points and 14 rebounds – 10 in the second half. Most notable was an emphatic tip-in dunk and a mid-range jumper, two things conspicuously absent from his repertoire in recent weeks.

"Everybody wants to do well," Thomas said. "But I've been struggling the past few games. I told my team I wouldn't let it happen again, so I've been working on finishing better and stronger. My teammates just told me, 'Keep playing hard.'"

#### Notes

SDSU has won six straight against TCU, sweeping the season series for a third consecutive year ... Gay tied his season high with six assists and once again had zero turnovers, meaning he has now had two turnovers in his last 218 minutes. In his last six games, he has 23 assists against two turnovers ...

TCU's Christian: "Our goal is to be the most improved team in the league in the second half (of the schedule). We took a huge step tonight in that direction." ... TCU's Thorns is now averaging a league-leading 7.6 assists in MWC games ... Three TCU players who combined for 17 points and 18 rebounds in the first meeting last month did not play on Saturday night: Moss, Sammy Yeager and J.R. Cadot.

#### 84

##### No. 7 Aztecs suffer two key injuries in lackluster win over TCU

By Scott Bair | North County Times  
February 6, 2011

The San Diego State men's basketball team has been blessed with good health during this standout season, allowing coach Steve Fisher's squad to realize its vast potential during its rise to national prominence.

That ended on Saturday night, when a pair of valued contributors left with injury and could not return. Starting guard Chase Tapley slipped awkwardly and suffered a left ankle sprain on a fast break shot attempt early in the first half. Senior forward Tim Shelton injured his right foot just before falling on the offensive end mere moments after entering the game.

While the Aztecs emerged with a 60-53 victory over Texas Christian at Viejas Arena, the injuries outweighed the few positives gleaned from the outcome.

While Shelton is a sparkplug substitute and an emotional leader, Tapley's loss is the biggest blow. The sophomore from Sacramento is a hustle player, one capable of big performances at either end of the court.

Tapley, like Shelton, emerged from the locker room in a protective boot customary following trauma to the lower leg. Fisher refused to elaborate on the extent of either injury and didn't discuss the possibility of a prolonged absence, despite the fact that Tapley's sprain seemed severe when it happened.

Torrey Pines High grad James Rahon logged Tapley's time at shooting guard and scored seven points and was 1-for-5 shooting in 33 minutes. Fisher generally kept a tight rotation against the Horned Frogs, using Rahon and his starting unit to surge ahead for good late in the first half.

That was a stark contrast to the team's reaction following a pair of injuries in rapid succession.

"We tried to (pick up the intensity)," Fisher said. "I don't know if it was losing Chase or Tim or both or TCU playing extremely hard, but it was different. (Losing Tapley) takes away a pretty good player. It creates disjointedness with your substitutions to be sure. I thought Rahon did a nice job, especially on the defensive end. But it leaves you without a really good player out there on the court."

The lull, palatable after Tapley's departure, was discernible in pregame warm-ups. The Aztecs (23-1, 8-1 Mountain West) weren't their jovial selves before facing a conference cellar dweller, with no signature dances to pump up the sellout crowd.

"We just didn't feel like dancing," Malcolm Thomas said.

Pregame hype certainly isn't mandatory, but San Diego State's lackluster effort after tipoff wasn't well received.

"There's no excuse for coming out slow like we did," said forward Billy White, who scored a team-high 19 points. "I don't care who or where we're playing. We have to come out with more intensity in the future."

The Aztecs shot 39.2 percent from the field -- four percent below their average -- and failed to create separation from a less talented team. The lead stretched to 10 with eight minutes remaining, but the Aztecs never gained firm control.

They tried to get Thomas going early, to no avail. The senior's recent struggles were amplified after several early misses, but he righted the ship somewhat in the second half with a distant jumped and a thunderous dunk on the way to 11 points -- his highest total in nearly a month.

"I hung my head a little bit early, but I can't let bad stretches affect me," said Thomas, "I kept playing hard and believed that I could finish strong."

Thomas and White finished strong to seal victory, but the postgame vibe didn't carry much excitement. A lethargic start and the injuries, especially to Tapley, tainted the win in many ways.

"We definitely didn't play our best basketball tonight," guard D.J. Gay said.

"It's hard to come in and replace a guy like Chase Tapley, but we do have depth and we have players that can fill in and do great things for this team. This is just adversity. It's important that we respond to it well."

#### 85

##### Buzz grows for Fisher as Coach of Year

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 8, 2011

Steve Fisher has been a college basketball head coach for 21 seasons. He's taken teams to the NCAA Tournament 10 times, had a dozen 20-win seasons, produced 14 NBA draft picks, won 405 career games, been to three Final Fours and is one of only six coaches to claim both an NCAA and NIT championship in his career.

Here's another number: zero.

That's how many times he has won conference Coach of the Year.

"If this guy has never won a conference Coach of the Year," Colorado State coach Tim Miles said, "that would be the biggest travesty I've ever heard of in my life."

The drought could end this season, with a San Diego State team that Monday moved up to No. 6 in the Associated Press poll and that before October had never been ranked in school history. Or will it?

"If this guy has never won a conference Coach of the Year," Colorado State coach Tim Miles said, "that would be the biggest travesty I've ever heard of in my life."

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Buzz grows for Fisher as Coach of Year")

Fisher is increasingly being mentioned in national Coach of the Year conversations, and two weeks ago the SDSU media relations department began promoting his candidacy with a page in the pregame notes and periodic e-mails to journalists across the country.

Take the name off the top of the résumé, and it makes perfect sense. A program that hadn't advanced past the quarterfinals of the conference tournament in the previous 13 years before he took over, a program that has never won an NCAA Tournament game, a program without the assistant coaching salaries, practice facilities and other budget items most big-name programs enjoy ... now No. 6 out of 345 Division I schools.

But it's San Diego State. And it's Fisher.

His lone coaching accolade came in 1992, when Basketball Times named him national Coach of the Year after guiding Michigan's "Fab Five" to a 25-9 record and an NCAA runner-up finish. But the higher profile entities — the Associated Press, Naismith Award, National Association of Basketball Coaches, U.S. Basketball Writers Association — all picked someone else that year.

Fisher never was Big Ten Coach of the Year in eight-plus seasons at Michigan, where he had only one losing record in conference.

The snub is even more pronounced in the 12-year-old Mountain West Conference, where the Coach of the Year has won either the regular season or MWC Tournament title every year except one. That was 2006, when Fisher's Aztecs won both the regular season and tournament. And BYU's Dave Rose was Coach of the Year.

"It never, ever has bothered me," said Fisher, whose Aztecs (23-1, 8-1) host Utah (10-13, 3-6) Tuesday night at Viejas Arena. "It just hasn't. I don't know why, but it hasn't. I don't want to dismiss the fact that I think I'm a good coach. I've done it a long time and I've learned a lot over the years. But I don't have to be told that, and I know that there are a lot of other good coaches out there."

He's heard the whispers, though. He knows what people are saying.

He recruits a bunch of athletes, then rolls out the balls.

"Most of the time, that statement comes from — no disrespect — people in the media," Fisher said. "I think people we play against would say, 'They are organized, disciplined, prepared and unafraid of allowing players to be players.'"

Or as Brian Dutcher, his longtime assistant going back to Michigan, put it: "We have more set plays than most people can imagine, but we don't always call them every time down court. One of Coach's favorite lines is: 'We have freedom within framework.'"

It is that philosophy, that ability to loosen the reins, that subordination of coaching ego, which sometimes distorts perception among the public. But not, apparently, among his peers.

UC Santa Barbara head coach Bob Williams: "People think Coach Fisher doesn't know what he's doing? He's a master coach, a master coach. When you don't overcoach, there's a reason. It's the right thing to do. A lot of people in our business overcoach because they want to show everyone how well they can coach."

UNLV's Lon Kruger: "I agree with the part that he's a very good recruiter, but he's also a very good X's and O's coach. Sometimes when you have good players and you recruit well, people want to find something else (to knock). But not true in this case."

Colorado State's Miles: "Steve has collected enough talent that maybe his coaching tactics get overlooked, and that's wrong in my book ... I've always said the greatest compliment a coach can have is: 'That team looks like they don't need a coach.' And I think you can say that about San Diego State. That means they're smart, they're prepared in practice, they go out and execute their game plan successfully, and they make it look easy."

The other obstacle is Montezuma Mesa is not exactly Chapel Hill.

Only twice in the past 20 years has someone outside the six so-called "power" conferences been consensus national Coach of the Year. Fisher has been mentioned by several national media outlets as a candidate this season, but so have the usual suspects from major conferences: Rick Barnes of Texas, Thad Matta of Ohio State, Matt Painter of Purdue, Jamie Dixon of Pitt.

The favorite appears to be UConn's Jim Calhoun.

That's the same Calhoun who regularly has a roster loaded with five-star recruits, has all the high-dollar amenities of a perennial powerhouse, has his team currently in seventh place in the Big East and is under NCAA investigation for failing "to promote an atmosphere of (rules) compliance."

Meanwhile on Montezuma Mesa, the Aztecs are on pace to break the school record for victories (26) with three weeks left in the season.

#### Injury update

The update on Chase Tapley and Tim Shelton is that there is none.

Neither practiced Monday, and the results from the MRI on Shelton's right foot won't be available until Tuesday. Neither was made available to the media again, and both are still listed as questionable for the Utah game.

## 86

### Rahon ready to rise to occasion

By Scott Bair | North County Times  
February 8, 2011

Don't make the mistake of stereotyping James Rahon.

To call him a spot-up shooter ignores other attributes contributing to his success. While he thrives shooting in open space, San Diego State's sophomore guard can create his own shot. He handles the ball well and is making significant progress at the defensive end.

While the Torrey Pines High grad prides himself on being a complete player, the No. 6-ranked Aztecs are so deep and so talented throughout the lineup that he isn't asked to do everything as he was in high school or during his freshman year at Santa Clara.

On Tuesday night, Rahon will be expected to do a lot more. Chase Tapley's sprained left ankle will put Rahon into the starting lineup against Utah and rarely let him leave the floor. He will draw tough defensive assignments and be expected to maintain his scoring output despite increased minutes.

"I'm going to have to step up and take on some extra responsibility," Rahon said Monday. "I'll do whatever Coach asks me to do, whether it's playing more minutes or making defense a top priority.

"If I'm in the starting lineup, I'm going to prepare as I would for any other game. I've always played significant minutes and I've had to be ready at any moment. I'll be ready for Utah on Tuesday and I'll do whatever is necessary to help this team win."

Aztecs coach Steve Fisher didn't update the status of Tapley's ankle or Tim Shelton's foot during a press conference Monday. Neither player broke a bone, but the result of Shelton's MRI -- scheduled for Monday evening -- won't be revealed until Tuesday.

Although Fisher remained noncommittal, it's very unlikely that Tapley or Shelton will play against the Utes at Viejas Arena. That means San Diego State's rotation will tighten up. Shelton was the first forward off the bench, leaving more minutes for players like Brian Carlwell and Medhi Cheriet.

When it comes to replacing Tapley, that will largely fall to Rahon. Proof of that came Saturday, when Rahon played most every minute after Tapley went down.

Rahon scored seven points against Texas Christian but received praise from Fisher for his defensive effort, an underrated aspect of his game.

"James has become a very reliable defender. He's really good at guarding off the ball, chasing shooters around," Fisher said. "If you go back and look at our last game against Utah, when he came in and guarded (Will) Clyburn, I thought he did a really good job. He was in his footsteps and created no separation and he made every shot a hard shot. We're going to need more of that from him."

Tapley is a solid defender. San Diego State needs Rahon to be one, too.

"Defense wins games and championships," Rahon said. "Chase is an excellent defender, and I believe I'm up to the task of defending some of the opponent's better players. It's something that I look forward to and take on as a challenge before every game, to keep my guy as quiet as possible."

That must be a constant as the Aztecs move forward without a pair of valued contributors. The team had been largely injury-free before Saturday, leaving their depth mostly untested. That will change on Tuesday, when Fisher delegates responsibility throughout his roster.

"Depth is a real asset for this team," Rahon said. "That's what makes this team so great. We match up against great players in practice every day, which only makes us better in the long run. We have the personnel necessary to carry on if guys unfortunately get hurt."

#### Aztecs notes

Senior D.J. Gay is a finalist for the Bob Cousy Award, given annually to the nation's top point guard. He's one of 10 finalists, a list headlined by Brigham Young star Jimmer Fredette. ... Sophomore F Kawhi Leonard was named the co-player of the week by the Mountain West Conference. He shared the award with Fredette. ... The Aztecs moved up a spot in the Associated Press poll and are now ranked No. 6. They're also No. 6 in the ESPN/USA Today poll.

87

#### Aztecs win laughter against Utah

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 9, 2011

Jim Boylen has been an assistant coach with three different NBA teams, and he worked under Tom Izzo at Michigan State. He's now in his fourth season as Utah's head coach.

Should he be worried?

Wyoming coach Heath Schroyer was fired Monday, just days after his Cowboys lost at San Diego State by 39. Tuesday night it was Boylen's turn to step into the graveyard that has become Viejas Arena, and the result was only slightly better.

The No. 6 Aztecs led by 27 at the half and ho-hummed their way to an 85-53 thumping that extended their home win streak to 17 and may or may not extend their coaches-axed streak to two.

The SDSU student section, not exactly known for its subtlety, began chanting with six minutes to go: "You are fiiiired, you are fiiiired."

It was the largest-ever margin of victory by SDSU against the Utes and the largest margin of defeat for Utah this season. More importantly, though, it was a large margin at a time when the Aztecs (24-1, 9-1) showed cracks of vulnerability, scrapping past lowly Texas Christian here three nights earlier as two key players went down minutes apart.

Turns out, just like the X-rays on Chase Tapley and Tim Shelton, nothing was broken.

Tapley (left ankle) and Shelton (right foot) didn't suit up, and they didn't need to. This thing was over before most fans, battling school-night traffic, settled into their red Viejas Arena seats. The Aztecs led 28-9 just 8½ minutes into the game, which, if they had kept up that pace, would have rendered a final score of 132-42.

"We were really, really good in the first half at both ends of the floor," Fisher said. "We were sensational."

The Utes (10-14, 3-7) closed to 20 midway through the second half before the Aztecs applied their foot to the pedal again and pushed the lead into the 30s. And with his team trailing by 32 with 1.2 seconds left, Boylen did this:

Called timeout.

Boylen said he did because "I've got to coach my team" and "it's a teachable moment" and "I have to take every advantage of it." But the timeout's timing may have stemmed from a perceived slight by the Aztecs on the previous possession, when Mehdi Cheriet took a shot and tipped in his miss.

SDSU coach Steve Fisher said Boylen asked him in the handshake line why they shot, basketball etiquette calling for the winning team to run out the clock at the end of a lopsided game. Fisher pointed out that there was a two-second differential between the 35-second shot clock and game clock.

"I asked him, 'Did you want me to take a (shot clock) violation?'" Fisher said. "We weren't trying to rub it in."

Boylen's version of their conversation: "I said, 'Good game. You've got a good team. Be happy what you've built.'"

What he's built is a team where five players scored in double figures and two others had eight points. Three had double-figure rebounds. The scoring off turnovers was 23-0.

Freshman Jamaal Franklin had his most meaningful playing time of his young career and responded with 13 points (4-of-5 shooting) and 10 rebounds in just 17 minutes. He drained two corner three-pointers and had several highlight-worthy dunks, including one that fellow freshman LaBradford Franklin purposely threw off the backboard for him.

Perhaps even more gratifying was D.J. Gay's night.

In their first meeting this season, a 71-62 SDSU win in Salt Lake City last month, Utes point guard Josh "Jiggy" Watkins torched Gay for 24 points, most off dribble drives. In the aftermath, Gay quietly said he wanted another shot at the 6-foot, 200-pound tank, and he spent the past few days watching the Jan. 8 game film over and over and over – even taking it home so he could watch it again in the hours before Tuesday night's tipoff.

Gay's line: 15 points, six assists, zero turnovers, five steals.

Watkins' line: seven points, four assists, four turnovers, one steal.

"He got the better of me in the first game," said Gay, who had four of his steals in the opening eight minutes. "It was definitely on my mind. I took the challenge, and as one of the coaches said to me afterward: 'You got him back.'"

But it was just another one of those magical nights at Viejas Arena. Kawhi Leonard threw an alley-oop for Jamaal Franklin on a second-half fast break. It was tipped by a Utah defender ... and went directly to Brian Carlwell.

Who dunked.

Another one of these nights: Carlwell admitted Aztecs players were cognizant that ticket holders get curly fries from an area fast-food establishment if they hold opponents under 50 points, so much that they discussed it amongst themselves with seven minutes left and Utah at 43.

"I said, 'They can't score these seven points in seven minutes. We got to get them these fries,'" Carlwell said. "There have been games where teams have had 53, and I go home and some of my boys call me and they're just mad."

But the laughing and joking and yucking it up ends quickly. Next up for the Aztecs is a Saturday game at UNLV, a team in desperate need of a signature win for its NCAA tournament resume and rapidly running out of candidates.

"We had a knock-down, drag-out with them at our place," Fisher said of the 55-49 win last month. "We're going into their building now. It will be a hard-fought game."

#### Notes

An MRI on Shelton's foot proved negative for any tendon or ligament damage, and the injury is not being classified as a "bone bruise." Fisher said he is hopeful at least one can play Saturday but didn't sound overly optimistic: "Chase has a really, really sore ankle. It's stiff. And Tim's foot is really tender and sore." ... SDSU broke its single-season home attendance record with three games remaining, all of which are soldout as well. The 137,785 through 12 home games breaks the 126,420 set in 2008-09 over 18 games ... The loudest ovation of the night was for former SDSU running back Marshall Faulk, who was introduced during a second-half timeout and recognized for his election into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The previous largest margin of victory by SDSU against Utah was 13 points ... The Aztecs have won nine straight games played on Tuesdays ... The 50 rebounds were a season high ... Billy White had 15 points and one technical foul, for his demonstrative disagreement with an over-the-back call in the first half ... A sign in the student section, referencing Utah's move to the Pac 10 next season: "Pac 12 hoops is minor league. So long losers." ... Utah has lost four straight and on Saturday plays at No. 7 BYU, which beat the Utes by 25 last month.

## 88 San Diego State as good as advertised

By Dana O'Neil | ESPN.com  
February 9, 2011

The play-by-play couldn't do it justice.

In the bland vernacular of the stat sheet, it read simply:

Good layup by Gay, D.J.

Miss jumper by Clyburn, Will.

Block by Carlwell, Brian.

Rebound defensive by White, Billy.

Good layup by White, Billy.

In reality, it was wow, oh my, dear Lord, a 12-second offense-to-defense-to-offense assault that left the San Diego State home crowd agog and summarized what the Aztecs are all about.

For the doubters who still believe San Diego State is merely a top-5 team by default, we present Gay to Carlwell to White as your basketball version of Tinkers to Evers to Chance.

BYU may have The Jimmer but the Aztecs have The Team, a roster as complete and built for a long run as any in the country.

Yes the opponent, er victim, of this particular 85-53 assault was Utah, a team in which maybe two guys are old enough to shave (there are 10 freshmen and sophomores on the roster). That, however, doesn't mean what we saw wasn't real.

San Diego State is real.

The Aztecs were without starter Chase Tapley (ankle) and sub Tim Shelton (foot) and still played with a fluidity and ease, dishing and dunking like a collegiate version of the Globetrotters.

"That was good, really good," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said. "We were dictating the pace, flow, getting runouts and dunks, making 3-pointers. We were very good. We can't play that way all the time, but we're good enough to have stretches like that."

We have come to the portion of the schedule in which we start to look for a team's Achilles' heel, to discover the weakness that will render them weak come NCAA tournament time.

Still searching for that weakness here in Southern California.

In Gay, the Aztecs have a dynamic and contentedly unselfish point guard. White and Malcolm Thomas, with Carlwell off the bench, own the inside and the boards.

James Rahon can't be left alone behind the arc and Kawhi Leonard is the one ingredient virtually every Final Four team has had of late -- a future NBA lottery pick.

And then there's the added bonus that this team is built on defense, and actually likes it, in fact. SDSU ranks 11th in the nation in scoring defense and 16th in field-goal percentage defense. In its past six games, the Aztecs are allowing a ridiculously stingy 55 points per game.

Five less and San Diego State would be indulging in curly fry overload.

The student section is awarded free curly fries whenever the Aztecs hold an opponent under 50 points.

"I said, 'We can't let them get seven points in seven minutes,'" Carlwell said. "We have to get them the curly fries. We've had games where we held them to 53 and I get home and my boys call me and they're mad. Unfortunately we couldn't make it happen this time."

The fast-food decadence award might be the only place the Aztecs failed on this night.

## 89 NCAA tourney-team selectors obviously like what they see

By Tim Sullivan | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 9, 2011

Stan Morrison has scouted San Diego State once from courtside seats and, by his own count, eight times on television.

When the doors close next month in Indianapolis, and the NCAA's selection committee is sequestered for its final deliberations on college basketball's tournament bracket, the athletic director of UC Riverside is one member who won't need to be briefed about the Aztecs. He has seen them plenty, and he has been paying attention.

"I know your guys," Morrison said Tuesday afternoon. "I know Billy White. (Malcolm) Thomas is an unsung hero. I know (Kawhi) Leonard, who's from Riverside. And (D.J.) Gay -- he's the keys to the limousine..."

"They've got a big target on their back. I saw that game they won at Colorado State, and Colorado State had their 'A' game. You want to see how teams react to that level of pressure."

For all of the statistical sophistication reflected in the Ratings Percentage Index and the erudite analysis of "bracketologists" such as Joe Lunardi and Jerry Palm, the selection and seeding of March Madness is still determined by mere mortals and, hence, subject to subjectivity.

Morrison and his nine committee cohorts want to know how various teams respond to different variables: to full-court pressure and 2-3 zones, to illness, injury, slumps and streaks, and in the closing seconds of a tight game on the road. They study this stuff so carefully, in fact, that it hardly leaves any room for regional bias, parochial politics or choice tee times.

In the interests of balance, each of the four geographic regions (East, Midwest, South and West) must be represented by no fewer than two committee members. Of the 10 current members, only four are affiliated with BCS conferences.

"I've never worked on anything in athletics that is so devoid of ego and politics," said Doug Fullerton, commissioner of the Big Sky Conference. "When we sit down with the coaches' group, they are shocked at the amount of basketball we've watched."

"Whether we're smart about basketball, that's another matter. But we really (do) understand the results."

No accident there. Membership on the Men's Division I Basketball Committee entails a five-year term so taxing that SDSU Athletic Director Jim Sterk declined an opportunity to pursue the Mountain West's next opening out of concern for the potential impact on his regular job.

In addition to their lengthy meetings preceding Selection Sunday, the committee will convene next week in Indianapolis for a midseason mock draft to help prepare new members for the real thing. To ensure that all members arrive educated, the NCAA provides satellite service throughout the season. Among the duties of Jon Kasper, the Big Sky's assistant commissioner, is to program the office DVR to record five or six games a night for Fullerton's viewing pleasure.

Morrison, formerly the head basketball coach at USC, routinely reports to his Riverside office between 5 and 6 a.m. Tuesday, his predawn duties involved studying the statistics of the Mountain West, Southland and Ohio Valley conferences and perusing the national polls "to see how out of whack they are."

He scheduled a two-hour window between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to follow five games: Tennessee-Kentucky, Cincinnati-DePaul, Central Michigan-Buffalo, North Florida-Jacksonville and Boston College-Clemson. During Riverside's December trip to Stanford, Morrison scheduled a side trip early on game day to see San Francisco and Montana play in person.

"On weekends," Morrison said, "it is not uncommon for me to see parts of 20

"In reality, it was wow, oh my, dear Lord, a 12-second offense-to-defense-to-offense assault that left the San Diego State home crowd agog and summarized what the Aztecs are all about."

- Dana O'Neil (ESPN.com - "San Diego State as good as advertised")

games. And let's suppose I couldn't see a game. The conferences will give us private passwords to get into their archives."

Utah State Athletic Director Scott Barnes, one of two first-year committee members, has been assigned primary responsibility for the Mountain West Conference. Morrison's main priority is the Big 12, with secondary coverage of the MWC. Fullerton focuses on the Ivy League, the Summit League, the Pac-10 and the Western Athletic Conference.

Not that any of these hard-core hoops junkies are constrained by their specific assignments. If there's a game to be seen, be it ever so humble, one of them is probably watching.

"I've seen San Diego State play four or five times on television," Fullerton said. "Very impressive."

This was before Tuesday night's 85-53 undressing of Utah, before the Aztecs improved to 24-1 and protected their position as the sixth-ranked team in both major polls, and long after SDSU's place in the NCAA Tournament was effectively clinched.

So far as the Aztecs are concerned, the main question confronting the committee is how high to seed them. Tuesday, both Lunardi and Palm had San Diego State as No. 2 seed opening the tournament in Tucson. Presumably, the Aztecs could be in line for a No. 1 seed if they were to win out and maintain or improve on their No. 4 RPI ranking.

"I think they're a Final Four team," Utah coach Jim Boylen said. "If they can solidify their backup point guard, I think they're a Final Four team."

That San Diego State has yet to win a single NCAA Tournament game is not supposed to enter into the seeding equation. Both Fullerton and Morrison said that enduring void in Aztec history was irrelevant to their discussions.

"It's the body of work in the year that's being evaluated," Morrison said. "What we talk about is who did you play, where you did play and how did you do. Who can rebound? Who can defend? Who can dictate tempo? Who's good out of timeouts? Whose bench is really strong?"

"There's never a mention of the conference. I watch for that stuff and never once have they slipped it by me."

90

### When it comes to basketball, Aztecs' Gay is the definition of dependable

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 10, 2011

When D.J. Gay has a basketball in his hands — and he always seems to have one on him — it's as though he's carrying around a child. Gay is the college game's Great Protector. When he gives it up, it's on his terms, not yours.

Quite simply, San Diego State's indefatigable point guard doesn't screw things up. What he's done through this 24-1 Aztecs run smack into a short group of the nation's elite is beyond unheard of.

D.J. Gay doesn't do Pete Maravich. He isn't all flash and dash. He's neither gunner nor acrobat. He isn't a giant. He's 6-feet tall and weighs 170 pounds. He isn't perfect. Sometimes it just seems that way. He's simply the most reliable college basketball player in the United States.

Go ahead and tell me otherwise and you'll be wrong. Name another player on another top team who plays as many minutes and handles the ball as much without stumble. Gay doesn't even have accidents in a game that often goes 120 mph.

The Aztecs have played 10 Mountain West Conference games, or 400 minutes. Gay has played in 368 of those. In five of them — including the last three — the senior has not committed a turnover. Zero. In three of those games he has committed but one, no more than two in the others.

Do you have any idea what this means, how extraordinary it is?

That's seven turnovers in 10 conference games against 40 assists; 29 assists to two turnovers in his last seven starts (271 minutes). That's enough. He brings the ball up court. He runs the offense. He breaks his back on defense. And yet he doesn't tire in a game in which fatigue leads to errors.

This just doesn't happen. I don't know. It's as though we're making it all up. Except we're not. This is an extraordinary basketball player and, if you've been paying attention over the years, an extraordinary young man.

"It's not as though he plays conservative basketball," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher was saying Wednesday after his team's Tuesday night thumping of Utah. "He just doesn't do things to get you beat. He makes great decisions. He's a special player, but if you don't watch him all the time you can't appreciate what he does; he does so many things the real good point guards do.

"He's our best perimeter defender. Last night (against Utah) he was ahead of everybody on the floor. He does all the things with a watchful eye."

Careful. But not too careful.

"You can't play afraid," Gay was saying. "It's all about risk-taking, but knowing when to take the risk. It's about knowing the flow. A lot of turnovers are more mental than physical. You can have a mental breakdown and take your eyes off of what you're supposed to be looking at. If I mess up, I think about it a split second. The game goes on. It's not the end of the world.

"The first thing I look at when I get the stat sheet is the turnover column, then assists. I want to make sure everybody's fed before I eat."

Not that he can't eat ... well, score. During his career, he's led the team in scoring on 16 occasions. He's scored in double figures 51 times. He made six threes against Air Force this year. He will shoot when he has to, as he did in the final two seconds last week at Colorado State, when his 18-foot jumper won it.

Some people wonder why Fisher didn't call a timeout before that final shot. Fisher doesn't.

"I'll tell you why," the coach said. "Because I knew D.J. wasn't going to do something foolish."

Is there another college coach who can go into a game basically knowing the player who is going to have the ball in his hands most of the time isn't going to screw up — maybe not even once? Fisher has a luxury enjoyed by few, if any.

"It's a big advantage, no question," Fisher admits. "We have what other clubs don't have. We play defense. We have the versatility to score from every spot on the floor, and that's huge. We have power players and finesse players. We can attack off the dribble. And we have a point guard who doesn't make mistakes. We're a hard guard."

The hard guard is D.J. Gay.

"It's come down to being comfortable with the ball," Gay said. "It's second nature, and knowing when to take the highest risk, when to make the hockey pass instead of the ooh-la-la pass.

"I'm not an in-your-face, rah-rah leader. I try to lead by example. I don't want to talk about it; people know it. When I was a freshman, I talked to the older guys, and they told me you need to do two things to stay on the court — play defense and don't turn the ball over.

"I took that to heart. I know turnovers can lead to bad things. It has a lot to do with confidence and not second-guessing yourself."

D.J. Gay isn't San Diego State's best player. He's San Diego State's greatest player.

**"Quite simply, San Diego State's indefatigable point guard doesn't screw things up. What he's done through this 24-1 Aztecs run smack into a short group of the nation's elite is beyond unheard of."**

- Nick Canepa (*San Diego Union-Tribune* -  
"When it comes to basketball, Aztecs' Gay is the definition of dependable")

## 91 College analyst Lappas thinks SDSU's men 'can play with anybody'

By John Maffei | North County Times  
February 11, 2011

Steve Lappas is an East Coast guy, born and raised.

He played at City College of New York and coached at Manhattan College, Villanova and Massachusetts, compiling a 237-143 record over 17 years.

These days, though, Lappas is a basketball analyst for CBS College Sports and Saturday he'll call his third San Diego State game of the season, a contest that has the sixth-ranked Aztecs at Nevada-Las Vegas. Tipoff is 5 p.m. on CBSCS as well as Channel 4 San Diego.

"I'm a basketball guy," Lappas said. "When I'm not working a game, I'm at a game. I'll see about 40-45 games live and hundreds more on TV or CD.

"I see a lot of games in the East, but I see teams from all over the country. And while TV or tape is good, there is nothing like seeing a game live."

Lappas has seen most of the top teams in the country, and he loves the Aztecs.

"There is no question San Diego State can play with anybody in the country," Lappas said. "But the competition is so stiff around the country that if the Aztecs were to play say (No. 14) Purdue, it would be a 50-50 game.

"If San Diego State was in the Big East, they wouldn't be a one-loss team. But they wouldn't be a five-loss team either."

The Big East boasts No. 4 Pittsburgh, No. 8 Notre Dame, No. 9 Villanova, No. 10 Connecticut, No. 11 Georgetown, No. 12 Syracuse, No. 16 Louisville and No. 25 West Virginia.

The Mountain West Conference -- where the Aztecs play -- has No. 7 BYU along with NCAA tournament bubble teams UNLV, New Mexico and Colorado State as well as also rans Wyoming, Utah, TCU and Air Force.

"It's easy to say Pitt is the No. 4 in the nation because they get tested each night," Lappas said. "So it's a little harder to say San Diego State is No. 6 other than they have an unbelievable record.

"One thing I really like about San Diego State is that they're very athletic, and they have a versatile front line.

"Billy White and Kawhi Leonard are so versatile on offense and defense. They can guard every position, rebound and pass.

"D.J. Gay is a phenomenal point guard. He never turns the ball over, never makes mistakes, never comes out of the game. He's as steady a guy as there is in the country. He runs the show. They wouldn't be where they are without him.

"James Rahon is the ideal guy off the bench, a pure 3-point shooter. And I like Tim Shelton and Brian Carlwell, too."

Lappas believes the Aztecs have the talent to get to the Sweet 16 and even the Elite Eight.

But he says Saturday's game at UNLV is more important to the Rebels than the Aztecs.

"It's a huge game for UNLV," Lappas said. "If UNLV wins, beats the No. 6 team in the nation, they're in the tournament.

"San Diego State and BYU are fighting for a No. 2 seed in the tournament. They're fighting for respect and not to get sent to Rhode Island."

Last season, the Aztecs won the MWC tournament, but were shipped across the country to Providence, R.I., for the NCAA tournament, where they dropped a three-point game to No. 14 Tennessee.

"The Mountain West Conference deserves more respect," Lappas said. "So it's important for San Diego State and BYU to finish strong."

The Aztecs and Cougars will be in the spotlight on Feb. 26 for a national TV game on CBS -- yes, CBS regular, the network of the NFL -- for an 11 a.m. game.

And CBS has already assigned its No. 1 regular-season broadcast team of Verne Lundquist and Clark Kellogg to that game.

## 92 Aztecs' White on fire heading into matchup in his hometown Vegas

By Scott Bair | North County Times  
February 12, 2011

Billy White had the college basketball world at his fingertips coming out of Green Valley High in Las Vegas. USC and UCLA came calling. Arizona State and Arizona wanted the 6-foot-8, 235 pound slasher's services. Memphis wanted him to help its rise to national prominence and, of course, Nevada-Las Vegas wanted him to stay right at home.

White went off book and chose San Diego State, then an up-and-coming program without the pedigree of White's other suitors. That was four years ago, and while some friends and family wish he would've stayed home, White doesn't regret his decision one bit.

"I felt comfortable when I first came here, and I still do," White said. "I've had a great experience, and I believe I'm a better and smarter basketball player for working with this coaching staff. I believe this was the best spot for me to flourish."

The Aztecs' schedule sends White home quite often, with a regular-season game at UNLV and the Mountain West Conference tournament in his hometown.

Homecomings have been a growth chart during White's college career giving friends and family who don't see him every game a progress report.

White has had good showings in Las Vegas ---- most notably a 28-point performance versus New Mexico in the MWC tournament semifinals last season ---- but he might be playing his best heading into Saturday's game against the Rebels.

"Going home is always special, no matter how many times I've done it," White said. "Playing in front of friends and family gives me a lift, and I believe it brings out the best in me. ... There will be a few more fans there this time because of our ranking, and I'm sure the atmosphere will be fantastic. I'm sure they'll be ready to play and so will we. I can't wait for tipoff."

The Aztecs are ranked No. 6 in the nation, and the senior from the Vegas Strip has become SDSU's hot hand. Proof of that comes from coach Steve Fisher, who rarely draws up plays for White. He designs ways to get others involved, with the ball delivered to an offensive force in an optimal place to score. Fisher frequently finds ways to get Malcolm Thomas and Kawhi Leonard involved in the offense, especially early in games.

When Fisher's attempt to get Thomas going early in last Saturday's victory over TCU didn't pan out, he changed his offensive focus toward yet another scoring option.

"We finally said, 'Let's go to Billy,' and then we went to him about seven times in a row, and he delivered," Fisher said. "He was very good. He was a hard guard for them in the second half, and he was a pivotal offensive piece for us in this ballgame. He did a really good job."

White scored 19 points in that game at a remarkable shooting clip that has become more trend than outlier. Points came efficiently, on 5-of-7 shooting and 90 percent accuracy from the free throw line. While White is an always efficient scorer, he has been on fire since a 3-for-9 performance at Brigham Young on Jan. 26.

White has hit 19-of-28 shots ---- a 68 percent shooting clip ---- in four games since the season's only loss. Performance has made White more of a focal point, especially with Thomas and Leonard in a relative shooting lull.

"If Coach calls plays for me, I have to score," White said. "It's as simple as that. He expects baskets out of those plays. I believe that faith is well placed and that, when given the opportunity, I can get the job done. It doesn't matter if it's on offense or defense or getting rebounds, it's my job to provide a spark."

White has done so in efficient ways. He averages 10.1 points per game, yet hasn't taken more than 10 shots in a game since Dec. 4. He has only done so three times this season, and averages 22 points per game in those instances.

Shots are at a premium on a team with so many scorers, while White's leading

the current charge, no one seems to mind.

"There are no egos here," Thomas said. "If someone keeps scoring ---- Billy's been that guy lately ---- you keep giving him the ball. We're an unselfish group that knows how to share the ball. Anybody can lead us offensively on any given night."

Efficiency has been White's signature since he arrived in 2007, but there's a reason why he's never been better. White assigns himself a summer project every year, and this offseason's venture focused on expanding his offensive repertoire.

Summer projects and a maturity only experience can provide have refined this raw talent originally known for uncanny athleticism. That's why he has become a versatile force that is increasingly hard to guard.

"I try to improve on something every offseason, and I make that my project during the season," White said. "I've put a lot of effort into my jump shot ---- especially from distance ---- which I believe has made more difficult to deal with. I know people see me as a driver and a slasher, but I believe I can be a complete offensive player, and I have the ability to do that right now."

**93**  
**Once a risk, White now all reward**  
 By Ed Graney | Las Vegas Review-Journal  
 February 12, 2011

Billy White is a bonus, a basketball player few college coaches expected to qualify and one that just a handful thought owned the potential to be special. He was an academic risk averaging 12 points as a junior at Green Valley High. No program missed on him.

But one gambled and signed him early.

San Diego State coaches in November 2006 took a chance they knew could end with egg firmly attached to their faces and the Aztecs in need of another player come the spring recruiting season. They held their breath and hoped for the best.

It's a truth those closest to White recall each time he has since shined on the court, each time an image has flashed of him winning Freshman of the Year honors or dominating a top seed such as New Mexico in a Mountain West Conference tournament game or going for 30 points against Gonzaga on national television or demoralizing some poor Texas Christian defender off the dribble in what seems like a 50th straight isolation play.

"From the beginning, (San Diego State) was the most aggressive recruiting him," said Adam Patai, who coached White at Green Valley. "The rumors out there about him not being able to qualify had a lot of teams backing off.

"But he qualified and worked extremely hard to do so. Now look at him. The national exposure. The season they are having. I really hope they make a deep run in March."

Billy White is the understudy on Broadway, the person a director might think important enough to learn a key role but isn't sure how often to place him center stage.

The sixth-ranked Aztecs who play UNLV at the Thomas & Mack Center today are led by a potential NBA lottery pick (Kawhi Leonard), a forward pro scouts are intrigued with (Malcolm Thomas), a point guard who turns the ball over as often as San Diego receives snowfall (D.J. Gay) and a veteran coach who, if you close your eyes and listen to him talk, you would swear it was the ghost of Jack Benny (Steve Fisher).

Oh, yeah. There is also White.

He is hardly an afterthought and yet the senior who owns averages of 10.1 points and 3.6 rebounds and a first step ridiculously quick for his 6-foot-8-inch frame isn't the team's primary or secondary option. He is not invisible but also not featured.

Which makes these facts all the more impressive: White before this season ends

will become the school's all-time leader in starts and will depart the only player in program history to shoot better than 60 percent for a career. The next closest didn't make 58 percent.

"Billy is a talented scorer," San Diego State assistant head coach Brian Dutcher said. "He is capable of huge games. We look at matchups, and if he is hot, we'll ride him. He has been great for us. Hasn't caused us any issues. He's a good kid."

Billy White is an achiever in the way that when something needs to be done, he obliges. Everyone told him he wouldn't qualify. He did. Coaches begged him to shoot more in high school and he became a star as a senior. Injuries slowed him at San Diego State and he kept coming back from them. His team struggled to put away lowly Texas Christian recently, and he took the game over in the final minutes.

White plays a final regular-season game today in front of family and friends he chose to leave four years ago because those in his immediate circle felt it best that he grow and mature and become a man away from Las Vegas. He never questioned it was the right thing to do.

"It was never personal against the city or UNLV," White said. "No offense to them. Coach (Lon) Kruger is a great coach, and they have a great program. They've always had great teams. I just felt a little more comfortable at San Diego State. They just stayed on top of me (academically). I think that's what made me pick San Diego State in the end. They were the first school that came into my house and said, 'It's not just about basketball.'"

Billy White is happy and has a college degree in sight. He is on a team expected to win the first NCAA Tournament game in school history and one some believe could be alive and defending into the bracket's latter stages.

He proved countless others wrong and never gloated about it. He has become what so many once doubted.

Billy White is special.

**94**  
**High-rolling Aztecs run over Rebels**  
 By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
 February 13, 2011

San Diego State beat UNLV 63-57 on Saturday at the Thomas & Mack Center.

The sport was men's basketball.

The assist came from soccer.

Every day at the end of practice for the first few months of the season, a manager would put 10 or 15 minutes on the clock and the Aztecs players would embark on the mundane task of shooting free throws. They would shoot in groups of three based on past performance, with the best shooter moving into the next highest group the following day and the worst shooter facing the ignominy of dropping down a group along with the obligatory ribbing.

It is a promotion/relegation system suggested by Aztecs assistant coach Mark Fisher and modeled after soccer leagues around the world – soccer being his sport of choice as a youth. "It's hard to get game-like free throws in practice, with game-like pressure," Aztecs guard James Rahon said, "but competing like that each day helped a lot."

Here's how much: The gang that supposedly couldn't shoot free throws straight, that ranked 327th in the nation last season, went 20-of-22 with 18,557 towel-waving, Rebel-yelling fans rattling their eardrums. In the final 95 seconds, four different players combined to calmly sink 8-of-8.

Good thing, too. Nothing else was going their way.

How many teams win close games in hostile environments while making only one field goal – yes, one – in the final 9½ minutes ... with their two starting post players in major foul trouble ... with a starting guard and top backup forward unavailable due to injury ... with their backup center hobbling around with a

**“‘Billy is a talented scorer,’ San Diego State assistant head coach Brian Dutcher said. ‘He is capable of huge games. We look at matchups, and if he is hot, we'll ride him. He has been great for us. Hasn't caused us any issues. He's a good kid.’”**  
 - Ed Graney (*Las Vegas Review-Journal* - "Once a risk, White now all reward")

wrapped right knee?

Oh, and senior point guard D.J. Gay stepped on a referee's foot late in the first half and rolled his ankle. He never came out. He wouldn't sit down in the locker room, instead pacing around the small room while Coach Steve Fisher gave his halftime talk, for fear it would tighten up.

(And still had 20 points, three assists and no turnovers in 40 minutes.)

"We gutted it out," Fisher said. "We've got a good team that finds ways to win. It's not always pretty and it may not always be conventional, but it is the way we play the game ... We were knocked back on our heels, but we found a way to right the ship."

And keep sailing it did. The No. 6 Aztecs are now 25-1 overall and 10-1 in the Mountain West Conference, keeping pace with No. 7 BYU (10-1) as their Feb. 26 showdown at Viejas Arena grows tantalizingly closer. It also was their fourth straight win against UNLV (18-7, 6-5) and 34th straight against an unranked opponent.

Another preposterous statistic: SDSU had no 25-win seasons for the first 87 years of men's basketball on Montezuma Mesa. Now it has three straight.

Getting No. 25 this season seemed like it would be relatively easy for the first 30 minutes. Rahon's layup with 9:50 left gave the Aztecs a 49-39 lead, and then he tried a three-pointer from the right corner that would have pushed the margin to 13.

That's when things got dicey.

Rahon's shot was a foot short, and Malcolm Thomas was whistled for an over-the-back foul on the rebound, his fourth. Billy White had picked up his fourth a few minutes earlier, and Fisher suddenly had a decision to make.

Tim Shelton was out with a bad bone bruise in his right foot. So was guard Chase Tapley with an ankle sprain. Backup center Brian Carlwell was in the locker room getting his tweaked right knee wrapped.

Fisher's decision: "I said, 'I'm not going to sit here and watch the lead evaporate. I'm going to shake the dice and take my chance.'"

Thomas and White would stay in.

White finally fouled out with 3:19 left when he pushed off with his forearm on a baseline drive and the Aztecs ahead 54-53. Tre'Von Willis made a running bank shot on the ensuing possession to give UNLV its first lead since 2-0.

Depleted, disjointed, discombobulated, the Aztecs never disintegrated. The Rebels did that for them.

Over the final 2½ minutes, the team that ranks eighth out of nine MWC teams in three-point shooting percentage (.282) and went 1-of-18 against the Aztecs last month jacked up six treys. Miss, miss, miss, miss, miss, miss. UNLV coach Lon Kruger watched it with hands on hips and three timeouts in his pocket.

The Aztecs were having their own issues scoring. Rahon's three-pointer with 4:48 left was their only hoop in the final 9½ minutes. The last Aztec other than Rahon to score a basket was Gay with 10:53 to go. They had a season-low seven assists and shot 30.4 percent (7-of-23) in the second half.

"UNLV was playing great defense," said Leonard, who had his fifth double-double (14 points, 10 rebounds) in as many career games against UNLV. "They got us out of plays a couple times down the stretch. We just found a way to get to the free-throw line instead, and everybody knew we needed to make them to win."

In the final 1:35, Carlwell, Gay, Leonard and Rahon went to the line. Make, make, make, make, make, make.

So much for all that talk about free throws being this team's Achilles heel.

"It can't be a one-hit wonder," Gay said. "We have to continue to hit free throws. There are still going to be close games. But this does show that we have the capability of knocking down free throws when we have to.

"This definitely shows the character of this team."

## Notes

Next up is New Mexico at Viejas Arena, Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. ... San Diego Padres outfielder Ryan Ludwick, who grew up in Las Vegas and had a .363 career batting average at UNLV, had his No. 18 jersey retired before the game ... With no late flights to San Diego, the Aztecs bussed home immediately after the game. Said assistant head coach Brian Dutcher in the glow of the victory: "It will be much shorter ride now." ... White, a Las Vegas native, to the Aztecs huddle during a timeout after he fouled out: "You have to get this win for me. You have to fight, fight. We only have four minutes left. You just need to fight for me." ... Gay extended his turnover-free streak to an incomprehensible 158 minutes ... The Aztecs were outscored 13-4 off turnovers, 28-14 in the paint and 19-4 by the benches ... In two games this season against SDSU, UNLV is a combined 2-of-33 behind the three-point line.

## 95

### Red and black have White's back

By Jay Paris | North County Times  
February 13, 2011

Billy White's Saturday homecoming was a dud. But San Diego State remains co-kings of the Mountain West Conference.

Thanks to the coolness of D.J. Gay, clutch baskets by James Rahon and inspired play off the bench by Brian Carlwell, the Aztecs edged Nevada-Las Vegas 63-57 at the Thomas & Mack Center.

But it was far from easy with White being far from the floor in the closing minutes.

White fouled out with three minutes, 19 seconds remaining, having produced just four points and five turnovers.

When he reached the bench, White buried his head in his jersey, ripped off his wristbands and did something he hadn't done all night: went off.

With coach Steve Fisher calmly talking to his players in a circle, White busted through as if someone had stolen his wallet.

"I don't want to come back to my hometown and lose to UNLV and see these people every time I visit," said White, a former standout at Las Vegas' Green Valley High. "I'm just glad we got the victory."

We're just glad he didn't lift a teammate and heave him into Jerry Tarkanian's nearby lap to get his point across. The Tark once chewed a towel; White told teammates don't wave a white one with him disqualified.

"He said, 'Guys, get this win for me and just fight and fight. We only got four minutes left, so fight for me,'" said teammate Kawhi Leonard, who finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds.

Added Rahon, the former Torrey Pines High star who had the Aztecs' only two field goals over the game's final 9:50: "Any time you are coming home you want to get a win in your hometown, and he was saying, 'Do it for me guys.'"

They did -- the game was tied with 1:22 remaining -- and we're still not sure how.

If wagering a few blocks away on the Strip that SDSU would sink 20-of-22 free throws, well, you would likely hit on 20 when playing blackjack.

The Aztecs entered the game converting 66 percent of their free throws, including 63 percent in conference play. I admit I had to check the statistic twice: 20-of-22!

"It can't be a one-hit wonder," said Gay, who had a game-high 20 points, was 8-of-9 from the line and hit three straight free throws in the final two minutes. "We got to continue to hit free throws, and this does show we have the capability of knocking down free throws in crucial times."

The Aztecs (25-1, 10-1 MWC) stood tall when it was necessary after the Rebels erased an 11-point first-half deficit in front of a raucous home crowd in a game they had to have.

UNLV is likely NCAA tournament worthy, but to ensure it, the Rebels need a signature win. In other opportunities -- twice against Brigham Young and on the road at No. 24 Louisville -- UNLV's pen ran out of ink.



SDSU's players knew what was at stake for the Rebels, UNLV fans waving white towels and screaming "Re-bels, Re-bels" knew it, and so did Fisher.

"Don't let anyone tell you Vegas isn't an NCAA tournament team," he said.

"Vegas is good."

And the Aztecs, on a day in which No. 1 Ohio State lost, were good enough.

"This will help us down the road, a month from now, because this definitely had the feel of an NCAA tournament game," said Gay, after another turnover-free outing.

"We will definitely benefit from this game, definitely learn from this game. We didn't play perfect at all, but a game like this definitely shows the character of our team."

It also showed one of the Aztecs biggest characters, White, that his buddies have his back.

"No player wants to be on the sidelines at the end of the game, but stuff happens," White said. "We just had to get through it."

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### Hutson has played an extensive role in San Diego State's success

By Tony Lacava | Bakersfield Californian  
February 13, 2011

San Diego State University's Viejas Arena has been rockin' this season like never before. Sellouts are a given, student fans having taken to waiting in lines overnight for tickets. The impressive, 12,414-seat venue is packed well before tip-off.

Big, strong, fast and athletic, coach Steve Fisher's Aztecs (25-1), in their sixth straight 20-win season, have been the toast of the West Coast, overshadowing even the traditionally stronger Pac-10 Conference schools.

Assistant coach Justin Hutson, whose basketball roots were nurtured for more than 30 years in Bakersfield, is not only along for the ride on this red-hot basketball adventure.

He helped to script it.

Hutson, once a scrawny All-Area point guard who played for his dad, Mark, at Bakersfield High, and later for Cal State Bakersfield's national championship teams in 1993 and 1994, and who later coached BHS, has carved out an impressive niche next to Fisher.

It's been a great run, Hutson said, not only because of the program's unprecedented success, but for the sheer benefit of working under Fisher, whose pedigree includes a 1989 national championship and two subsequent Final Fours at Michigan -- remember the Fab Five? -- and three NCAA Tournament appearances in his 12 years at SDSU.

"The way he handles his players and coaches is the best," Hutson said. "The even-keel consistency. He's the greatest boss in the world to work for."

On the four-man coaching staff, Hutson, 39, carries the titles of defensive coordinator and recruiting coordinator.

With a roster of stars who are off to the best start in school history, are ranked No. 6 nationally and who allow opponents a shooting percentage of less than 40 percent, it's clear that Hutson is having a positive impact.

"He relates and deals well with players on the team," Fisher said of Hutson. "As a coach, you're the teacher, and (he's) not afraid to tell someone they're not working. He is an outstanding recruiter, a wonderful people person, and I put him in charge of our defense. He's our point person. We're all involved, but Justin is the choreographer. He brings the main thrust to that part of the game. And yet he's very involved in the offensive end."

Although success is not new to this Aztec program, this is the first season in

which the Aztecs have cracked the Top 25, climbing as high as No. 4 in January. Fisher's been featured on ESPN's Sports Center as well as that network's report called "Outside the Lines." Aztec guard Tim Shelton, who played his freshman season at Bakersfield High, recently was interviewed on the sports TV talkshow "Jim Rome is Burning."

"The program's growth has received so much attention lately, and that's different," Hutson said. "We've usually had five or six sellouts a year. Now, every game has been sold out."

The national notoriety has been nice, but it hasn't made anyone's job easier. The coaching staff of any college basketball program is up early and to bed late, a grind fraught with travel to and from games and recruiting excursions, recruiting phone calls, breaking down video, making game and practice plans, dealing with media, etc.

And, of course, practices.

"He takes great pride in making sure we don't neglect to do the little things," Fisher said of Hutson. "In practice and in games, he's a stickler for detail. He makes sure that effort is the main part of ability. He's done a magnificent job with the defense."

The Aztec players, most of them recruited by Hutson, have learned to appreciate his approach.

**"'He's an outstanding basketball coach, and that means every aspect,' Fisher said of his understudy. 'He's the son of a coach, and it shows. He is someone that is very well versed in every facet of what it takes to be successful, and that in no small part is based on his father (Mark) and all success he had.'"**

- Tony Lacava (*Bakersfield Californian* - "Hutson has played an extensive role in San Diego State's success")

"He's definitely not quiet, and he's definitely an intensity guy," said senior guard D.J. Gay, whose last-second, 18-foot jump shot beat Colorado State 56-54 last week. "We'll be doing the smallest drill over and over til we do it right. He's always stressing being mentally tough, as much as physically tough. He's just done a great job of changing people's thoughts from 'I've got to score,' to 'let's lock this team down.'"

"He's gotten the team all on the same page. When he talks, everyone's willing to buy in. Everyone respects him."

SDSU's voracious defense has limited opponents to an average of 58.6 points per game this season, 10th best average in the nation, and 39 percent shooting, totals most any coach would be proud of.

"We still win games when we're not playing well offensively," Hutson said. "The proudest thing that we can say is that we've had off-games offensively, numerous games that we still won because we continued to play defense."

Count New Mexico coach Steve Alford among the believers.

"The best defensive team we've played all year," Alford told the San Diego Tribune last month after his Lobos shot 37.9 percent on their home court in an 87-77 loss to the Aztecs. "They probably don't get enough credit for what they do at the defensive end. ..."

"They're big, they're long, they're athletic, they've got a good demeanor to their defense, they're playing with a sense of urgency at the defensive end. That makes them very hard to score against."

On the recruiting trail, Hutson doesn't normally venture far and wide, mostly because he's taken ownership of his own backyard, Southern California. And he's succeeded despite operating in the shadow of the more celebrated Pac-10. For example, he snagged Kawhi Leonard, a 6-8 sophomore forward who could wind up being an NBA lottery pick in June, out of King High in Riverside -- right under the noses of USC and UCLA.

Of 13 roster players, 10 Aztecs are from California, six of those from Southern California.

Coach Hut, he is kind of the reason why I am at San Diego State," said Gay, who attended Poly High in Sun Valley and was also recruited by USC, UC Irvine and Pepperdine. "I was verbally committed (to UCI), but coach Hut called me and called me and said, 'You can't make that decision without coming and taking a look at San Diego State.' He still pushed, just to take one last look, got me down here and the rest is history."

"He recruited all the players I came in with and it seemed like a great fit."

Hutson's been a gym rat since he was barely able to walk, and his coaching tendencies took root at a young age as well. A fixture at his dad's Bakersfield High practices when he was a grade schooler, he was also keeping the scorebook at night-time varsity games when other boys his age were parked in front of their TVs.

Although he was roughly half the size of the BHS players on the teams, he wouldn't hesitate to let them know if he thought they were slacking.

"I was very emotionally invested in the Drillers, and that's an understatement," he said. "I'd go home, similar to now, rethink the game in my mind, and couldn't asleep. I was like that at a young age. It was like that if the Drillers lost a game.

"They were my role models and heroes. My father was No. 1, and Andrew Hill (former Bakersfield High and South High coach) was a big part of my life, my godfather."

Little did he know, at the time, it was all part of his path toward a career that included four years as the Driller varsity coach, and two as an assistant at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo before he landed at SDSU.

"He's an outstanding basketball coach, and that means every aspect," Fisher said of his understudy. "He's the son of a coach, and it shows. He is someone that is very well versed in every facet of what it takes to be successful, and that in no small part is based on his father (Mark) and all success he had."

Hutson says he believes he meshes "real well" with Fisher, and continues to learn from his mentor.

"He's at his best when times are at their worst. And he's a great role model," Hutson said of Fisher. "And he has a very good rapport with everybody -- people of all walks of life, and he has the respect of the basketball community."

The chemistry, the players, the offense, the defense -- it's all made for an incredible experience this season for the Aztecs -- and their fans.

"It's great," said Justin's dad, Mark, who retired from teaching and coaching last year, with 493 victories, and still resides in Bakersfield. "I've been to several San Diego State games and had lot people come up tell me how much they love (Justin)," he said. "And coach Fisher has said it to me several times. As a parent, I'm very proud. You want your kids to excel and do well for themselves. So yeah, I'm a very proud papa."

97

### Big man SDSU needs may already be on roster

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 15, 2011

San Diego State might not have to look far to fill the projected void of big men on its basketball roster next season.

How does a 6-foot-11, 300-pound center eminently familiar with the Aztecs program sound?

Brian Carlwell technically is a senior this year, but he confirmed Monday he plans to apply with the NCAA for a medical redshirt from his sophomore year at Illinois that would give him another season of eligibility.

"It's an option, and it's good to have options," said Carlwell, who had four points and five rebounds in 16 key minutes off the bench in Saturday's 63-57 win at UNLV. "Who would want to give this up if they don't have to?"

Added Coach Steve Fisher: "I haven't said, '100 percent do you want it or 100 percent do you not want it?' I just told him, 'I want you have the option to chew on.' But we'd love to have him back."

The Aztecs, who remained No. 6 in both major polls Monday, will lose senior starters Malcolm Thomas and Billy White along with reserve forward Medhi Cheriet. Sophomore Kawhi Leonard could enter the NBA draft, and junior for-

ward Tim Shelton has spent most of his career injured.

Carlwell was involved in a life-threatening car accident near of the end of his freshman season at Illinois. He was still suffering from the effects of a major brain trauma as a sophomore when he tore knee ligaments just three games into the season. He never played again for the Illini, transferring to SDSU after the season. He sat out one year per NCAA transfer regulations, then played the last two for the Aztecs.

The general NCAA rule is that, before being sidelined by a serious injury or medical condition, a player can compete in no more than 30 percent of his team's games and not at all in the second half of the season. But there are other factors, and Carlwell would have to return to school for another year; he currently is one class from graduation.

A year ago, Carlwell said he was "90 percent" sure he wasn't interested in a medical redshirt. Now he puts his chances of returning for a sixth season at closer to "50-50."

"We'll see if it's even available," Carlwell said. "If it's available, then we'll sit down and see if we want to use it."

98

### Cool Aztecs just following their coach's lead

By Jay Paris | North County Times  
February 15, 2011

"Fisher gets mad during games, but he doesn't go mad. Fisher gets even, but he doesn't do it in a below-the-belt manner. His act is one of class, but it also comes with a homespun approach that makes many wonder if he's the players' coach or grandfather."

- Jay Paris (North County Times - "Cool Aztecs just following their coach's lead")

Steve Fisher, like other wise men, took care of his sweetie Monday.

Valentine's Day arrived, and so did the San Diego State men's basketball coach, with his wife, Angie, at Donovan's Steakhouse.

"Well done, coach," the server might have said, and we're not referring to how Fisher likes his entree prepared.

In searching for reasons behind the Aztecs' unprecedented success this season, many point to the No. 6-ranked team's talent, its senior leadership and the players' acceptance of lesser roles for the benefit of the squad. But don't overlook Fisher, whose team is 25-1 and eyeing a high seed in the NCAA tournament.

"We still got five regular-season games, three (MWC) tournament games and hopefully six NCAA postseason games," said Fisher, who has produced three straight 25-win campaigns. "Hopefully we are still talking superlatives in April."

March is around the bend, but there was madness Saturday night in Las Vegas.

The Aztecs let a double-digit lead slip away with Nevada-Las Vegas making a motivated push for the upset. The Thomas & Mack Center was rocking and the Aztecs appeared poised to roll over.

But a glance at their bench showed Fisher, providing a calming influence for a team that was losing its composure. The Aztecs surrendered the lead but eventually recovered to win 63-57.

"When you have a veteran coach like him, he is able to manage all phases of the program," SDSU athletic director Jim Sterk said. "He can manage the success and when it's not so successful.

"That's why I think he is really important from here on out. He's been through this before; he's been to the NCAA tournament. He's like the mad scientist pushing all the right buttons behind the curtain, like the Wizard of Oz."

But even the Wizard, like the Wicked Witch, melted down at the end. Instead, Fisher consistently maintains his composure, helping his players do the same. "There's a great deal of comfort and trust between Coach Fisher and the team," said guard D.J. Gay, the MWC's co-player of the week. "We've gotten closer as a unit, and in close games and tough spots he shows that he's confident that we're going to make the smart play and the right choices."

Fisher's confidence comes from 30-plus years in coaching along with lessons learned from his father about displaying emotion in moderation.

Fisher gets mad during games, but he doesn't go mad. Fisher gets even, but he doesn't do it in a below-the-belt manner. His act is one of class, but it also comes with a homespun approach that makes many wonder if he's the players' coach or grandfather.

"You have to have emotion, but it has to be controlled," Fisher said. "You have to know when it is time to vent, when to be along for the ride, when to instruct and when it's time to yell. You are who you are, and my dad was a lot like that. I think you develop a personality and you play to that.

"I think I portray that steadiness, not to get too caught up in winning and too despondent when we struggle a little bit, and we talk about that."

Fisher's name will certainly be mentioned in national coach of the year discussions. He's also associated with a description I didn't think possible.

"He just seems real cool to me," SDSU's Kawhi Leonard said.

Cool? This soon-to-be, 65-year-old cat with a white batch of hair and horned-rim -- although fashionable -- glasses?

"Most times, he is real mellow and there is nothing that really bothers him," Leonard said. "He stays calm like if we need a play run, it's not 'Everyone hurry up and get together.' Instead, he has his little marker and pad, and really calmly calls the play, and we go out and it works."

Fisher has worked the equal of a college basketball miracle in his 12th season at SDSU. Before his arrival, not only was Aztecs hoops not on the map, it couldn't be located with a satellite.

The team stunk, the fans were apathetic and Aztecs home games were a great place to cram for finals. Good luck finding a more peaceful place to study.

Now Fisher's fun bunch plays before sold-out crowds, with students lining up overnight to secure tickets. That hasn't gone unnoticed by Fisher, as his team recently mingled with the Viejas Arena campers.

"None of us were forced to do it, but we needed to do it," said Fisher, setting up his phrase for the day. "It's not what you do. It's how you do it.

"The players could have moped around out there and walked through the line like 'OK, you talk to me.' But they were out there high-fiving, smiling, shaking hands. It was as if we had players running for office."

The Aztecs' sprint to the tape comes with Fisher being part coach, part old-school, part cool. At some point, SDSU will become rattled, but then again, in watching Fisher, maybe not. SDSU has played its best but is prepared for the worst.

"We do a lot of drills, like the four-minute drill, with us being down by one or up by two," Leonard said. "He knows that winning is a thin line and what to practice on to get tight wins like Saturday in Vegas."

Fisher has given his all for some time. That makes this season such a hoot, especially considering he's a cancer survivor.

Grateful? You bet.

"I think that is well put," he said. "Because of age, experience and everything that has happened to me in my career that I'm more appreciative of the opportunity to be a part of this and more willing to look at all the good things that we are doing and not dwell too much on the things that we are not doing."

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### SDSU's Shelton smiles through the pain

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 16, 2011

Tim Shelton had five ice bags strapped to his body at a recent San Diego State basketball practice. He was asked if that's his personal record.

He shook his head. Six is, set a couple days later.

One bag on his right wrist, one on his left shoulder, one on his right knee, two on his left knee, one on his right foot.

"I walk into his room," said SDSU guard D.J. Gay, Shelton's roommate, "and I see him icing himself, all the time, constantly. He even has his own icing machine."

"That," Shelton said, "probably would be the title of my autobiography: 'Bags of ice.'"

**"That Shelton can make light of the situation, that he can turn joint pain into jokes, is probably what allows him to keep wearing an Aztecs uniform long after mere mortals would have succumbed to a body that continuously, and callously, betrays him."**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* -  
"SDSU's Shelton smiles through the pain")

That Shelton can make light of the situation, that he can turn joint pain into jokes, is probably what allows him to keep wearing an Aztecs uniform long after mere mortals would have succumbed to a body that continuously, and callously, betrays him.

"Until you have walked in his shoes," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said, "it's hard to imagine what it's like. But he's dealt with it with a smile on his face, never complaining. It is what it is. It's his lot in life."

The 6-foot-7 junior forward is up to four surgeries on his left knee alone, including two microfracture procedures that are conducted in only the most severe cases. A month ago, a teammate fouled him hard in practice and badly tweaked his left shoulder. In a November tournament in Ohio, he broke his fall with his right wrist while taking a charge and his shot hasn't been the same since.

Now it's his right foot. He did something to it -- stepped on an opponent's shoe, maybe landed on it funny, maybe twisted it, he's not sure -- against Texas Christian on Feb. 5. X-rays and an MRI were negative, leading doctors to call it a bad bone bruise, but he hasn't played since.

Will he play tonight at Viejas Arena for the No. 6 Aztecs (25-1, 10-1) against New Mexico (17-8, 5-5)?

Shelton shrugs. Even he has no idea.

He practiced some Tuesday, alternating between riding a courtside exercycle and participating in live drills on the floor and doing rehabilitation exercises for his foot and standing on the baseline encouraging teammates and retreating to the training room for more ice.

But that's how most practices go for Shelton. He is the only college player in Fisher's 21 seasons as a head coach who gets to decide when he practices, how hard, and how long. It is a level of trust that developed last season, when Shelton's post-operative knees would swell and stiffen for seemingly no reason at all.

Fisher: "I don't say, 'What's wrong, why can't you practice?' I just say, 'Let me know what you can do.'"

Shelton: "He says, 'Tell me how you feel. If you can go, you go. If you can't, you can't. If you're on the sideline, just make sure you're talking to the younger guys. Make sure you're practicing mentally.' I still feel like I'm able to be productive without as many reps in practice."

It is that part of the game, between the ears rather than between the lines, which makes Shelton a viable part of the rotation despite averaging just 2.0 points and 1.9 rebounds while shooting 37 percent. The more pertinent statistic is his "hockey rating," which measures the score when you're on the floor. Before Shelton's most recent foot injury, the Aztecs were plus-56 points during Mountain West Conference games with him in the game, which ranked third on the team behind D.J. Gay and Kawhi Leonard.

Another stat: three.

That's how many charging fouls he drew in 20 minutes of a tight game against Utah last month. Some players will go an entire season, some an entire career, without drawing three charges.

"He provides great maturity, stability, intelligence that is immeasurable in terms of statistics," Fisher said. "Our wish is that one day he's able to show all these folks what he's really capable of doing."

Since his junior year at Clovis West High outside Fresno, Shelton has played one full season – his second at SDSU, when he appeared in 34 games and started 13. Injuries wiped out his senior year at Clovis, and all but four and nine games in his two other seasons at SDSU.

“You hear that word, potential, said about people, and I feel like I haven’t reached mine yet,” said Shelton, a history major who plans to begin graduate studies next fall. “I feel like I haven’t played that well all year. It’s a little frustrating, yes, but at the same time you see our record and it’s hard to complain.”

#### Notes

Aztecs guard Chase Tapley (left ankle) practiced again Tuesday and is considered probable to play tonight, although it’s unclear if he will return to the starting lineup or come off the bench ... New Mexico is 12-1 at home, the lone loss being the 87-77 decision to SDSU on Jan. 15. The Lobos are 4-6 on the road and 1-4 in MWC play ... The Aztecs have won nine of the last 12 from the Lobos ... Gay turned 22 on Tuesday.

#### 100

##### **Aztecs' Fisher brings sanity to the Madness**

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 16, 2011

San Diego State’s men have been playing basketball since 1921. They never have won an NCAA Tournament game. Their coach, Steve Fisher, has. He knows the drill. He knows the layout. He knows what it takes to survive the grind. He knows the difference, because there is one.

It’s just that his success came at Michigan, where he took over the Wolverines before the 1990 Tournament and won it all, and twice reached the finals while at Ann Arbor. There are 347 Division I basketball coaches. Only 11 currently working have won an NCAA title.

Fisher has had three chances during his tenure as Aztecs head coach, only to fail in the first round of the tournament — although, on his last two trips, against Indiana in 2006 and Tennessee last year, his guys were good enough and couldn’t get it done.

But while this may be the same school with the same history, it’s a new day. Fisher’s 25-1 Aztecs, ranked sixth nationally, are by far the best team he’s had here. And they probably don’t have to be concerned about what happens during next month’s Mountain West Conference Tournament. They’re going to the NAAs, almost surely as a very high seed.

In other years, Fisher knew they had to either win the MWC shindig or do very well in it to move on. Last year, they were considered a lock once they reached the final of the conference tournament in Las Vegas. The lock was broken. If they hadn’t won, judging by the tournament committee shipping them off to the Providence, R.I., subregional as an 11th seed, they weren’t going.

“As much as I felt we were going to go, you are exactly right,” says Fisher, whose Aztecs play host to tough New Mexico tonight in Viejas Arena. “They did us no small favor. This year, we’re going to make the tournament.”

So what does it take? There’s danger at every corner, every seemingly clear alleyway in the NAAs, damn the seed. Tournament play is different play. Ever hear of November Madness?

“Often, it’s the luck of the draw,” Fisher says. “Sometimes it’s a matter of getting a good seed. We had good luck that year at Michigan. It looked like we were going to play Alabama, which was really, really good, in the second round, and Alabama got beat by South Alabama.

“You need some good fortune, especially in today’s world, where there’s not much separation between teams. Who are the refs? Can you stay out of foul trouble? Are you deep enough? Do you have guys who can step up and play like veterans?”

What’s difficult is trying to convince your guys it’s just another game on the schedule, because it obviously isn’t. Good teams gag in the tournament all the time or there wouldn’t be Cinderellas.

“You try to keep it the same and try not to get caught up in the fact it’s the NCAA Tournament,” Fisher says. “You try to travel the same way, prepare the same way, don’t do things differently than you would do on a normal road trip. You have to make sure you don’t make it bigger than it should be. There’s al-

ready enough pressure to perform.”

State is loaded with seniors and players who were part of last year’s NAAs. These kids aren’t going to be seeing many things they didn’t experience in Providence, where they came within a three-pointer of Tennessee, which a week later came within a basket of the Final Four.

“Being there last year is going to help us,” Fisher says, “no matter where we play. We’ve never had that before, being in back-to-back tournaments. It’s not like we were out of our element against Tennessee. If we play a little better in the first half, we win that game.”

Tournament Fisher tries his best not to coach and manage a game much differently than the regular-season Fisher. But circumstances can change your plans.

“In the tournament, you really can get away with a shorter bench because of the TV timeouts,” he says. “They’re at least 45 seconds longer in the tournament; you get longer breaks. And that should help a guy like D.J. (point guard D.J. Gay), who plays so many minutes, and Kawhi (forward Kawhi Leonard) to catch their breath.

“And our senior leadership could be invaluable, as it has been all year. This group of seniors has played so long together they know the elements involved. They believe we’ll be able to continue doing what we’ve been doing.”

There are no great teams this year. There were no great teams last year. State, with the right amount of luck, has to be given a puncher’s chance. The Aztecs can be beaten, but they also can beat any team they play because they now have shown they can win just about every way imaginable — from the inside, outside, from in front, from behind, and even from the all-important free-throw line, as they did making 20 of 22 foul shots Saturday in Vegas.

Remember, no one expected Michigan to win in 1990.

“Hell no,” Fisher says. “But we started playing well. And you have to play well.”

That would seem to be a key. And these guys can play well.

#### 101

##### **Barring late stumble, Aztecs' Steve Fisher should be coach of year**

By Mike DeCourcy | Sporting News  
February 16, 2011

Q: OK, clock’s winding down, who’s your coach of the year?

DeCourcy: I’m kind of surprised this isn’t nearly unanimous at this point: San Diego State’s Steve Fisher.

He has won 96 percent of his games this season. If everyone who saw that coming were to stand at once ... everyone would remain seated.

The Aztecs won at UNLV, at New Mexico, at California and at Gonzaga, four venues that aren’t easy to conquer. They play a lovely brand of team-first basketball.

Now, I’m not married to that pick. I learned my lesson in that regard with Michigan State, which I identified as preseason No. 1 last spring and stuck with even after the roster was damaged when Chris Allen was sent packing. I’ll stay married to my wife, but that’s it.

So if Fisher’s Aztecs were to lose next Saturday’s home game against BYU, if they were to lose any game that cost them the Mountain West regular season, then I’d reconsider. Exclusive of that development, this is a no-brainer.

#### 102

##### **Point guard Gay proves durability by rarely leaving the floor**

By Scott Bair | North County Times  
February 16, 2011

D. J. Gay crashed to the hardwood, and he didn’t do so gracefully. It’s hard to tuck and roll after stepping on a foot he didn’t know was there.

The most indispensable player on the San Diego State men’s basketball team sent quite a scare through the Aztecs when he stepped on an official’s foot while running back on defense Saturday at Nevada-Las Vegas. But as is his custom, Gay

didn't leave the game.

In sickness and in health, he rarely does.

"I was concerned, obviously," said coach Steve Fisher, who sent a substitute to the scorer's table only to have Gay wave him back to the bench. "I thought we were going to have to take him out for at least a second."

The senior point guard averages 34.4 minutes per game and has played every second in four games, including Saturday's dramatic victory at UNLV. In Gay's mind, any moment simply standing in place qualifies as rest.

"Technically, it's not 40 straight minutes," Gay said. "Every four minutes there's a TV timeout. Every free throw, every timeout that's called is a chance to take a breath. Just being able to catch my second and third wind in a matter of a minute or two of sitting down during a timeout is really what helped sustain my intensity."

Gay isn't likely to catch much rest when the No. 6 Aztecs host New Mexico on Wednesday night. And he didn't get much rest after injuring his ankle in the fall at UNLV.

He kept moving, pacing around the visitor's locker room during halftime to keep his sore ankle from tightening up and finished the game with a team-high 20 points, helping San Diego State stave off a late UNLV rally for a 63-57 victory.

Gay is more than just a better alternative to what Fisher has on the bench. He rarely makes mistakes, despite the heavy minutes he logs.

He hasn't committed a turnover in four consecutive games while playing 150 of a possible 160 minutes. He has just six turnovers since conference play started on Jan. 5 and hasn't committed more than three in a game all season.

"D.J. has made me look good," Fisher said. "I said (early in the season) that he was our most important player, and he's been that and then some every stretch of the way. He's so reliable. He never gets ruffled under the stress of the moment and has a comfort level now that, when he has that ball, we know he's going to make a decision that's good for us."

Part of Gay's durability comes from experience and the faith of those around him. Another part comes from moments unseen, when Gay built himself into the player fans see today in quiet gyms with after-hours conditioning and a work ethic that is truly tireless.

"He's the best conditioned athlete I've ever coached. He never appears to be tired, and that's on him," Fisher said. "That's what he's done both during the season and in the offseason to make sure he gets there and then maintains it. He works harder when no one's watching than anybody we've got, on the little things. He's just a tireless worker, and it's paying huge dividends. Yes, I'd like to rest him some, but we may or may not have the luxury to do that."

Gay spent five days per week on campus during the offseason, pushing his body to the brink. He joins his seldom-used teammates in voluntary workouts, watches film and dissects opponents, gaining confidence from a belief that no one works harder.

"I pride myself on that," Gay said. "You have to keep working, because when you stop, somebody else is (still working). I'm not the tallest or the most athletic, so I knew early on that success in this game would come through hard work. I knew I had to put in more time and effort to keep up with more athletic players. "That's why I spent the offseason working on agility and lifting weights and doing the necessary things to change my body and prepare it for the toll taken by playing a full season. ... I feel great despite being so deep into the season. I'm ready for the stretch run. I'm having a blast this season. I don't want to miss a moment."

The Aztecs looked tired. No, they looked exhausted.

They had their hands on their hips. They bent over and put their hands on their knees. They slumped their shoulders. They looked up at the clock, as if that somehow would make it tick faster.

They won, of course.

"We do enough to get ourselves victories," Coach Steve Fisher said.

But this was a game that couldn't get over soon enough for No. 6 San Diego State, and the 68-62 decision against New Mexico at soldout Viejas Arena said as much about the Lobos' fight as the Aztecs' fatigue. If college basketball games were 48 minutes, or even 44 or 42, the Aztecs might be 25-2 today.

The team that has found new and creative ways to win all season found yet another Wednesday: Hang on for dear life.

"We didn't play our most intelligent basketball," captain D.J. Gay said.

This was a 14-point game midway through the second half when the fuel light began to blink. Three minutes later, it was down to seven. With 1:20 left, it was down to four.

The game was eerily similar to Saturday's win at UNLV, when the Aztecs managed just one basket in the last 9½ minutes and instead survived at the free-throw line. Against New Mexico, they had one basket in the last 10½ minutes, and that was a layup by Kawhi Leonard with 49.7 seconds left.

Thirteen of their final 15 points came at the line, where they were 21-of-31.

"You just have to play through it when shots aren't falling on the offensive end," Gay said. "Just keep playing hard on defense."

As the final seconds mercifully expired for the Aztecs (26-1, 11-1), fans began chanting, "We want Jimmer, we want Jimmer," a reference to the highly-anticipated Feb. 26 home game against BYU and guard Jimmer Fredette.

The Aztecs players, no doubt, are looking forward to the game as well, but perhaps for different reasons. They get a bye next Wednesday, meaning they have a full week off between Saturday's game at Air Force and the nationally-televised BYU showdown.

They could use it. The 27 games, the pressure of a No. 6 ranking, the rugged travel in the Mountain West Conference, the heavy minutes by several starters, all seemed to catch up with them late in the second half.

"We have done a good job playing through fatigue," Fisher said, "playing through a bit of frustration and playing through not-so-good offensive play to not allow ourselves to be hurt at the defensive end. One basket in the last 10 minutes, and we found a way to make stop after stop on the defensive end."

New Mexico coach Steve Alford abandoned his game plan from their first meeting, when he clogged the middle and dared the Aztecs to shoot threes. Bad idea. That resulted in a scalding 13-of-25 night behind the arc, including seven treys by D.J. Gay.

"They killed us," he said.

This time, he didn't have the Lobos (17-9, 5-6) double-team the post and instead extended perimeter defenders on the shooters. He also used a soft 2-2-1 press that dropped into a 2-3 zone, forcing SDSU to run clock and slow the tempo.

It worked. For a while.

The Aztecs attempted just eight three-pointers all game but exploited the space inside – Malcolm Thomas and Leonard each finished with 22 points, nearly all of them in the paint or on free throws from fouls there – and built a 31-24 halftime lead. They pushed the lead to 11 on a one-handed, sideways dunk by Thomas off Leonard's lob, then to 52-38 on a deep three by James Rahon with 10:31 to go.

**"Part of Gay's durability comes from experience and the faith of those around him. Another part comes from moments unseen, when Gay built himself into the player fans see today in quiet gyms with after-hours conditioning and a work ethic that is truly tireless."**

- Scott Bair (*North County Times* - "Point guard Gay proves durability by rarely leaving the floor")

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### Aztecs hang on against New Mexico

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 17, 2011

## 104-105

But that was it for baskets for nearly 10 minutes. The Aztecs missed their next seven shots and six of their next 12 free throws.

They didn't shoot free throws nearly as well as against UNLV on Saturday, when they were 20-of-22. But they didn't have to, not when you compensate for a dip in quality with sheer quantity.

What saved them were 22 free throws in the final nine minutes. What also saved them were back-to-back offensive rebounds off missed free throws inside a minute left.

"The tale of the tape was free throws in the second half," Alford said. "They get there 29 times in the second half, we get there nine times. That's a hard one ... That was the difference in the game."

**Notes**

Chase Tapley and Tim Shelton both came off the bench after being sidelined by injuries since Feb. 5. Tapley finished with five points, two rebounds and one assist in 20 minutes. Shelton played just four minutes, but drew a charging foul ... The 26 wins ties the school record (26-10 in 2008-09) with four regular-season games remaining ... The win streak at Viejas Arena goes to 18 and the streak against unranked opponents to 35 ... The Aztecs had two 20-point scorers in the same game for the first time since the Nov. 13 opener against Long Beach State.

Gay finally turned it over. He entered the game having gone 158 minutes without a turnover and he didn't have one until 40.7 seconds left in the first half, when his errant pass caromed off the shin of Brian Carlwell and went out of bounds. That ended his streak at a preposterous 177 minutes, during which he had 23 assists. Said Gay: "I think I was overanxious. I got too excited about making that play. It goes to show I'm human."

Thomas and Leonard were a combined 18-of-22 from the line. The rest of the Aztecs were 3-of-9 ... New Mexico held a 37-33 advantage on the boards, just the second time SDSU has been outrebounded during the conference season ... Tony Snell, a 6-foot-7 freshman guard, got his fourth start of the season and at times covered Kawhi Leonard, his former teammate at Riverside MLK High ... Alford is 3-6 against SDSU, the worst of any Mountain West Conference foe. The only other MWC team he's under .500 against is UNLV (3-4) ... New Mexico point guard Dairese Gary is the MWC's career assist leader with 522. Second on the list is SDSU's Richie Williams at 479.

## 104

**Uncharacteristically sloppy Aztecs hold off Lobos**

By Scott Bair | North County Times  
February 17, 2011

On the verge of a blowout win, the San Diego State men's basketball team took its foot off the gas.

Still, the No. 6-ranked Aztecs were able to hang on down the stretch and post a 68-62 Mountain West Conference victory over New Mexico on Wednesday night before another sellout crowd at Viejas Arena.

In matching their school record for victories in a season, the Aztecs (26-1, 11-1) were sluggish, they were uncharacteristically sloppy and they were bogged down by New Mexico's aggressive play.

Still, San Diego State's veteran bunch did what was necessary, weathering their cold shooting and taking just enough time of the clock on each possession to keep the Lobos (17-9, 5-6) at bay.

"Shots weren't falling, and we weren't at our best, but we kept grinding and played through it," SDSU point guard D.J. Gay said. "Basketball is a game of runs.

"We made ours, and they made theirs. We went through a significant field-goal drought, but when shots stop falling and you struggle on the offensive end, you have to play tough defense. We did that tonight, and were able to secure the win."

Though the Aztecs lost control on the offensive end, they didn't let that affect their defense or their free-throw shooting when it mattered most.

"We have done a good job playing through fatigue, playing through a bit of frustration and playing through some not-so-good offensive play without hurting ourselves on the defensive end," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said. "We made one basket in the last 10 minutes, yet found a way to make stop after stop when it

mattered most."

James Rahon's 3-pointer with 10:32 remaining gave San Diego State its biggest lead at 52-38. Then New Mexico closed off San Diego State's interior offense and whittled the lead.

The Aztecs got to the free throw line often after that, but they struggled until making their final six free throws of the game to maintain a two-possession lead.

Malcolm Thomas and Kawhi Leonard, who had 22 points each, provided a steadying presence on the line by combining to hit 18-of-22 free throws.

The Aztecs normally thrive when the going gets rough, but New Mexico's physical play seemed to wear the home team down. For the first time in recent memory, the Aztecs looked tired and a bit frustrated.

That was a stark contrast to the start of the second half, when a 6-2 run turned a seven-point halftime lead into a double-digit advantage.

"It was an aggressive game and we didn't play our best," said Gay, who committed his first two turnovers since Jan. 29 in the game. "We didn't play our most intelligent game, which kept things competitive down to the very end."

**Aztecs notes**

Chase Tapley and Tim Shelton played for the first time since getting hurt Feb. 5 against Texas Christian, entering the game on a double substitution with 15:49 remaining in the first half. Tapley scored five points in 20 minutes. Shelton played sparingly and did not score in four minutes. ... More than 20 NBA scouts were at Wednesday's game – including Los Angeles Lakers general manager Mitch Kupchak – primarily to watch SDSU's Kawhi Leonard and New Mexico's Drew Gordon.

## 105

**Aztecs' program has become a national powerhouse under Steve Fisher**

By Bernie Wilson | Associated Press  
February 18, 2011

If anyone thought Steve Fisher was still living in the shadow of Michigan's Fab Five, they haven't been paying attention to what he's done at San Diego State.

Although it's taken 12 years, Fisher has transformed a backwater program into a top-10 team and San Diego into a basketball town. Montezuma Mesa has become the place to be, as the Aztecs, laden with Californians, play before loud, sellout crowds. Their ultimate goal is to finally win a game in the NCAA Tournament.

Sitting in his corner office overlooking Viejas Arena, Fisher contemplates the transformation in both his career and at SDSU, which was 26-1 and ranked No. 6 going into Saturday's game at Air Force.

Someone recently told Fisher that he's still viewed as a Michigan man. True, Fisher always will be associated with Bo Schembechler's blustery declaration that "a Michigan man will coach Michigan, not an Arizona State man," after Bill Frieder announced on the eve of the 1989 NCAA tournament that he'd accepted the job at ASU.

"My response was, 'Not here. Not in San Diego,'" said Fisher, who led Michigan to the 1989 national title. "I've been in San Diego now for 12 years, I've been a head coach at San Diego State longer than I was at Michigan. And here they view me as a San Diego State man."

This is SDSU's sixth straight 20-win season and seventh overall under Fisher.

"What we've done, because of our success, we've gotten this national attention now to where people back in the Midwest and all over, are saying, 'Boy, this is a team. This might be the best team since the Fab Five,'" Fisher added. "I don't want to make those kind of statements, but we're proud of the fact that we're selling this building out and we've got a team that's being talked about. We've got a team for the first time ever ranked nationally and yet, our goal is to get to the tournament and win a game in the tournament. That's how neophyte we are in terms of postseason success. And that's our goal."

What Fisher has done at SDSU is remarkable. Hired in 1999, two years after he was fired at Michigan, he inherited a team that won only four games the previous season. His first team went 5-23, including 0-14 in the Mountain West and winless away from San Diego.

Now, with a team led by senior point guard D.J. Gay and sophomore forward Kawhi Leonard, Fisher has obliterated that sad-sack image. When the Aztecs appeared at No. 25 in the preseason Associated Press Top 25, it marked their first-ever ranking. They reached No. 4 before losing to Jimmer Fredette and BYU on Jan. 26 in Provo, prompting Cougars fans to rush the court. The rematch, which has been sold out for weeks, is Feb. 26 at 12,414-seat Viejas Arena.

Frieder, now a radio analyst, lives part-time in Del Mar, where Fisher lives, and often attends SDSU games.

"You know what? I'm tired of talking about Michigan and the Fab Five," Frieder said. "That's almost 20 years ago for him. There's a perception out there, unfortunately, and I think this vindicates him. They should be talking about the job he's doing at San Diego State. I've followed this program for years. This place was a morgue. He took a place that was a morgue and made it the eighth wonder of the world, as far as I'm concerned."

SDSU has had 11 sellouts this season at Viejas, where the student section, known as "The Show," sets a raucous tone. The Aztecs had eight sellouts total in the previous 13 seasons at the arena.

"I think he's got a great team," Frieder said. "If he can keep them healthy, I think they're going to go deep in the tournament. They're Butler of a year ago. They've got a solid chance to go deep."

Butler reached the title game before losing to Duke.

SDSU, on the other hand, is 0-6 in the NCAA Tournament, including three losses under Fisher.

Fisher has built a team with a decidedly California feel. His starting five has one San Diegan, senior forward Malcolm Thomas, who's in his second season at SDSU after transferring from Pepperdine. Gay is from the Los Angeles suburb of Sun Valley and Leonard is from Riverside. Sophomore guard Chase Tapley is from Sacramento, leaving senior forward Billy White of Las Vegas as the only out-of-stater among the five.

Another San Diegan, backup guard James Rahon, transferred from Santa Clara.

"It was not exclusively by design and yet, I think no matter where you are, you're better served recruiting a smaller circle and kind of keep it going," Fisher said.

"So, if there were enough people right here in San Diego that we felt could help us win, we would go no further, because those are the ones that you have the best shots at. The closer you are, all things close to equal, the better served you are. That was kind of our theme — stay in California, stay in the West, selectively recruit nationally."

Fisher often has said that while Gay might not be the team's best player, he's certainly its most important player. Two weeks ago at Colorado State, the Rams tied the game with 10 seconds left. Fisher decided not to call a timeout and left it up to Gay to make a play. He dribbled down the court and hit an 18-foot fadeaway jumper with 1.8 seconds left for a 56-54 win.

SDSU's best player is Leonard, whose huge hands gather in seemingly every rebound in sight. Leonard has 18 double-doubles this season.

"We recruited him harder and better than anybody," Fisher said. "I know that's bragging, but we did. We watched him practice, we saw more games than anybody."

Gay hopes Fisher gets as much credit for his work at SDSU as he did with Michigan. "He's done a great job here in building this program," Gay said. "This city has become a circus now with all the success we're having this season. He's probably the most popular guy in San Diego."

106

### Dutcher has been Fisher's reflection at SDSU

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 19, 2011

Some college basketball coaches have busboys for assistants. Brian Dutcher does not fill Steve Fisher's water glass. He's the coach inside the coach, Steve Fisher's eyes, ears and confidant — and when needed, his conscience, his mind reader.

He comes with portfolio.

San Diego State's top assistant has been around Fisher so long he could take his name. They've been together since their Michigan days in 1989. He came with Fisher when Steve took the Aztecs position 10 years later. Wherever the loop has been, Dutcher hasn't been let out of it.

"Dutch," the son of a coach — his dad, Jim, is a member of the University of Minnesota's Hall of Fame — plans and conducts practices for the 26-1 Aztecs. He recruits. During games he doesn't just sit there and holler for hollering's sake.

"I've spent 20 years with Coach Fisher, and I can say it's hard not to like coming to come to work every day," Dutcher says. "Some assistants are limited. Coach Fisher always has given his assistants responsibilities."

"I feel like a contributor. I make decisions on the floor. I feel like I'm coaching the team. If I just sat around watching him coach for 20 years, I'd probably be someplace else. Here, you feel your work's important. At some places, the head coach does everything and assistants sit on the bench with their arms crossed."

Something's working. Heading into today's game at Air Force, the Aztecs are the nation's sixth-ranked team. They are a close-knit group.

"It's not hard to work for Coach Fisher," Dutcher says. "He's the greatest boss in the world. I've been fortunate. All the coaches I've worked for have been real gentlemen; their parents raised them right. They have core values. Great coaches are great leaders. They know how to get the most out of individuals."

Dutcher laughs at the notion that Fisher isn't a great X's and O's coach, that they just roll the ball onto the court and let the players have at it. It is stupid thinking. Watch the Aztecs play defense and tell me they aren't well-coached. Watch their offense closely and see why they're so hard to play.

"We've heard that for years," Dutcher says. "Ask the coaches we play. We run a ton of offense. As Coach likes to put it, we have freedom within framework. If you see an opening within that framework, take advantage of it."

"We want our players to think outside the box. Great players win games; that's what separates teams. The thing about Coach Fisher is, he builds confidence. He wants a team with swagger."

**"His biggest fan, Steve Fisher, believes Dutcher should be a head coach."**

- Nick Canepa (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Dutcher has been Fisher's reflection at SDSU")

Athletic arrogance. It's built through practicing and practicing well. Good coaches talk about good and bad practices all the time for a reason. It's where you win and lose.

"Our kids play with great confidence," Dutcher says. "Practice is for teaching; the game is the test. If you have to teach during the test, you can't coach. We coach 'em up during practice and when they take the test they're basically on their own. You can't look around for the answers when the game is going on."

Dutcher sure sounds like a head coach and it's pretty much a mystery why he hasn't become one. There have been interviews here and there over the years. He's 51 now, and if State continues down this avenue of success, it figures he's going to be taken away — if the feeling's right.

"I don't obsess about it; I've always enjoyed where I've been," he says. "I've always had fun. I can close my eyes and dream about being a head coach, but I don't obsess. I know how good it is to be in a great situation and not worry about the next one."

"Coaches can be like military. We've only moved once. I've been able to give both my girls a stable life and I take pride in that. Sometimes opportunities don't come but it's important for me to say I have a great job. A lot of guys rush to that first job. It may not be a great situation and your career could be over in three years, given the nature of our business now."

His biggest fan, Steve Fisher, believes Dutcher should be a head coach.

"Absolutely," Fisher says. "Brian does everything a head coach does and he does everything in an extraordinary fashion. There's a constant with Brian. He's family-based. That's what we preach, what we prioritize."

"He's not looking to punch the ticket to get to the next rung. There's no jealousy; he appreciates where he is. When he does get a head coaching job, I'm

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going to feel terrible and happy at the same time.”

For now, though, there's 26-1. At last, Brian Dutcher is working for a target.

“All these teams we're playing need quality wins to make the (NCAA) Tournament,” Dutcher says. “We're the quality win now, but that's good for us. Come tournament time, we're going to be tested.”

“All the years I've been doing this, there's never been 26-1. Not with the national championship team at Michigan, not with the Fab Five. Guess if you're around long enough, you'll see it all.”

Hey, that's my line.

## 107

**Board work carries Aztecs past Air Force**

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 20, 2011

Steve Fisher is kind, polite, friendly, fatherly Midwesterner. He listens intently and pauses that extra moment to ensure you have finished speaking before responding. He is generally a calm person, not susceptible to the whims of emotion, not prone to mood swings like the Midwest weather.

So on the rare occasion that he marches into the locker room at halftime of a basketball game, thunder in his voice, lightning in his eyes, players tend to sit up and take notice.

“It definitely was a shock,” senior guard D.J. Gay said. “That's the first time he's raised his voice in a very long time.”

“On a scale of 1 to 10, it wasn't a 12,” senior center Brian Carlwell said. “But it was probably a 10.”

It also was probably necessary, shaking the No. 6 Aztecs from a first-half funk and willing them to a 70-58 decision at Air Force in a half-full arena on a lazy Saturday afternoon on which most folks were outside enjoying unseasonably balmy temperatures.

It gave the Aztecs (27-1, 12-1) their school-record 27th win with three games remaining in the regular season and at least two more in postseason tournaments. More immediately, it cleared the final obstacle before Saturday's epic encounter at Viejas Arena against No. 7 BYU.

And it saved them from the national ridicule of losing to a school that is now 0-30 all-time against Top 10 opponents and 1-71 against ranked teams.

“Coach was telling us our performance was unacceptable,” forward Malcolm Thomas said, “and it was. We can't play like that if we want to make a run in the NCAA tournament.”

“We all knew what we had to do,” Gay said. “Coach raising his voice like that in the locker room definitely pushed us over the hump.”

What set off Fisher was a first half that started with Thomas not jumping for the opening tip and ended with Air Force forward Tom Fow going backdoor on James Rahon for an uncontested two-handed dunk for a 32-31 lead. The Falcons led by as many as seven points in the half; the Aztecs shot 30.3 percent, were outscored 8-0 on fast-break points and generally looked like they were playing a game at 11 a.m. on their West Coast body clocks, which they were. “You hope that they understand, ‘Don't take it personal. But take it personal,’” Fisher said. “I was hot at halftime. I really was ... I was heated.”

They didn't shoot much better in the second half – Gay and Rahon finished a combined 3-of-17 on threes – but it didn't matter. Their best offensive play was not to set screens and swing the ball around the perimeter for an open shot. It was to take any available shot, miss it ... and grab the rebound. And grab they did, collecting with a season-high 21 offensive rebounds.

“If they don't make it, they go get it,” Air Force coach Jeff Reynolds marveled. “We didn't do a very good on the defensive boards, but they had something to do with that.”

Making matters worse for the Falcons (13-12, 4-8) is that they predominantly played zone, which can expose you on the glass because you block out an area instead of a specific man. Factor in that they take cockpit size into consideration

when recruiting big men, and it wasn't a fair fight.

The overall rebounding margin was 50-27. In the second half, it was 30-11.

Or look at it this way: In the second half, the Aztecs had 18 misses and rebounded 11 of them, a staggering and ultimately devastating amount.

Three times, the Aztecs got three shots on a possession. Once, they got four.

Second-chance points: 19-2, SDSU.

Thomas finished with 20 points and 13 rebounds. Kawhi Leonard had 18 points and 15 rebounds. Chase Tapley, a 6-foot-2 guard, had eight rebounds off the bench.

“Killed us on the boards,” said Air Force's Derek Brooks, a 6-5 forward. “We could have tried to push them out more, but they use their length and jump over you.”

The Aztecs built a 15-point margin midway through the second half and then did what they have done for three straight games now, which is suddenly stop making shots and survive almost exclusively at the free-throw line.

Against UNLV, it was one basket in the final 9½ minutes. Against New Mexico, one basket in the final 10½ minutes. Against Air Force, zero baskets for the final 7:50.

Instead they shot 25 second-half free throws, making 17. Down the stretch, they were 11-of-12.

“Like everyone says,” Gay said, “we can win in a variety of ways.”

BYU awaits.

**Notes**

With a 12-point lead and a two-second differential between the 35-second shot clock and game clock, the Aztecs purposely took a shot-clock violation (while Air Force retreated on defense) instead of shooting. In a similar situation against Utah on Feb. 8, the Utes guarded the Aztecs hard and the Aztecs took a shot – which didn't go over well with Coach Jim Boylen, who called a timeout with 1.2 seconds left in apparent protest ... The attendance at Clune Arena was 3,463. Cadets weren't required to attend (as they are for most football games) due to the three-day holiday weekend ... The previous school record for wins was 26, in 2008-09 ...

The 12-1 conference start is the first time in 90 years of men's basketball on Montezuma Mesa that SDSU has won 12 of its first 13 league games ... It was the seventh straight win against Air Force and 36th straight against unranked opponents ... It was the fifth time this season the Aztecs have trailed at halftime ... Thomas has had back-to-back 20-point games for the first time in his 94-game Division I career ... All 12 of Air Force's losses are to teams with winning records ... Michael Lyons led the Falcons with 18 points, but only four of them came in the second half.

## 108

**Steve Fisher's done a fab job rejuvenating San Diego St**

By Associated Press  
February 21, 2011

If anyone thought Steve Fisher was still living in the shadow of Michigan's Fab Five, they haven't been paying attention to what he's done at San Diego State.

Although it's taken 12 years, Fisher has transformed a backwater program into a top-10 team and San Diego into a basketball town. Montezuma Mesa has become the place to be, as the Aztecs, laden with Californians, play before loud, sellout crowds. Their ultimate goal is to finally win a game in the NCAA tournament.

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SDSU, on the other hand, is 0-6 in the NCAA tournament, including three losses under Fisher.

Fisher has built a team with a decidedly California feel. His starting five has one San Diegan, senior forward Malcolm Thomas, who's in his second season at SDSU after transferring from Pepperdine. Gay is from the Los Angeles suburb of Sun Valley and Leonard is from Riverside. Sophomore guard Chase Tapley is from Sacramento, leaving senior forward Billy White of Las Vegas as the only out-of-stater among the five.

Another San Diegan, backup guard James Rahon, transferred from Santa Clara. There are four other players from California on the 12-man roster.

"It was not exclusively by design and yet, I think no matter where you are, you're better served recruiting a smaller circle and kind of keep it going," Fisher said. "So, if there were enough people right here in San Diego that we felt could help us win, we would go no further, because those are the ones that you have the best shots at. The closer you are, all things close to equal, the better served you are. That was kind of our theme — stay in California, stay in the West, selectively recruit nationally, that sort of thing."

Fisher often has said that while Gay might not be the team's best player, he's certainly its most important player. Two weeks ago at Colorado State, the Rams tied the game with 10 seconds left. Fisher decided not to call a timeout and left it up to Gay to make a play. He dribbled down the court and hit an 18-foot fade-away jumper with 1.8 seconds left for a 56-54 win.

SDSU's best player is Leonard, whose huge hands gather in seemingly every rebound in sight. Leonard has 18 double-doubles this season and 35 in his career.

"We recruited him harder and better than anybody," Fisher said. "I know that's bragging, but we did. We watched him practice, we saw more games than anybody."

Leonard said he also was recruited by Arizona, Arizona State, UCLA, USC and Michigan.

"I just had a feeling for the school," Leonard said about SDSU. "Since my junior year they were the first school that started recruiting me hard. I came down here for unofficials, got with their players, just liked their players, the way they acted around me. They brought me in, loved me, just brought me in like I was a teammate already."

"Other schools, like UCLA, I wasn't their main option to get first," Leonard said. "I was kind of their second option. If they didn't get another player and I still was left around, they probably would've signed me. I wasn't just their main focus point. Here at San Diego State, they wanted me here. They weren't trying to get somebody else ahead of me."

Fans are keeping their fingers crossed that Leonard goes to the NBA later rather than sooner.

"When I hear it I just smile and just keep walking," he said of the NBA talk. "I'm just serious about being a college basketball player right now and focusing on our team and getting our next win. It's not even a thought right now."

Fisher continues to do well bringing in transfers. Senior center Brian Carlwell also is a transfer, having spent his first two seasons at Illinois.

Early on, Fisher recruited anyone who would let him in the door.

"A lot of them wanted me to come in initially because of where we came from," he said. "They wanted to hear about the Fab Five, their parents did. We talked to a lot of people. Sometimes you get to know them and they go someplace else and it doesn't quite work out and they remember us. That's another reason to make sure you get into some homes and make sure you get on somebody's short list, even though you know in your heart that you better have three others because we've got an outside, outside chance to get him. But we still recruit him."

The Fab Five, the most famous group in Michigan basketball history, led the Wolverines to the national title game as freshmen in 1992, and repeated the feat as sophomores in 1993. Because of forward Chris Webber's involvement with booster Ed Martin, the school has vacated the records from both seasons.

Gay hopes Fisher gets as much credit for his work at SDSU as he did with Michigan.

"He's done a great job here in building this program," Gay said. "This city has become a circus now with all the success we're having this season. He's probably the most popular guy in San Diego."

## 109

### SDSU shouldn't feel slighted by polls

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 22, 2011

This is for those of you who have been San Diego State basketball fans since Thanksgiving. Before the latest round of polls ties your Fruit of the Looms in a knot, relax. Mix in some roughage, angry villagers, and douse the torches. Everything's OK. Really it is.

It's easy to feel slighted. But don't be. If you want to get ticked off, think about gas prices.

The Aztecs were ranked sixth in both the AP and ESPN/USA Today polls last week, and since then, four of the teams sitting in front of them — Kansas, Ohio State, Pitt and Texas — lost while SDSU won twice to lift its national-best record to 27-1.

Yet, when the polls were released Monday, the Aztecs remained sixth in the AP, and the coaches — most of whom haven't seen State play 15 seconds — moved them up to fourth (with three-first place votes). What an outrage! It's a commu-

nist plot fueled by East Coast bias.

It isn't. And there's going to be more movement after BYU comes to Viejas Arena on Saturday for the most anticipated college basketball game in this town since Cabrillo sailed into the harbor with his crew playing H-O-R-S-E by tossing cannonballs into apple barrels.

There are a few things to remember here. Before now, SDSU played basketball 90 years without getting ranked. This is not UCLA, not Kentucky, Duke, North Carolina, Kansas or any other hoop bastion.

Maybe you remember the basketball nation crossing its fingers and holding its breath as SDSU prepared to replace Smokey Gaines?

As my father might say, the Aztecs have to eat a few beans yet. As they might say in the mob, the Aztecs have to make their bones. They could be made Saturday, which won't be Judgment Day, anyway, or later on, when men decide it's time to be men.

But they haven't been made yet. The Aztecs are really good floaters in the tiny Really Good Lake, but they haven't won anything. They've never won an NCAA Tournament game. Can we really expect the nation to see them led by Bill Walton and Lew Alcindor?

"It's a good point and you're exactly right," Aztecs coach Steve Fisher said Monday. "The traditionalists are saying, 'Prove it. You beat Gonzaga in their place, but it took Gonzaga 10 years to get where they are.' Whether that's fair, I don't know, but that's how it is."

Don't forget, most Aztecs basketball games are televised on The Mtn., and Al-Jazeera is easier for some people to get. You can talk about East Coast bias all you wish, but how many Easterners can see State play?

The Aztecs have lost once, at BYU, and it came on a Wednesday night when not much was going on nationally. That game was on CBS College Sports, which can be seen in a whole lot more places than The Mtn. It won't be until Saturday, when SDSU-BYU will be nationally televised on the CBS mother station, when most of the nation's press can get another peek.

College basketball writers love the sport, and unlike football, it's spread out at all hours throughout the week. They watch. But it's hard to vote for a team you haven't seen (unless you're a coach). On the latest AP poll, two writers voted State as high as second, and my guess is only one of them has seen the Aztecs play more than once.

As for Fisher and his players, if they're concerned about the rankings, they aren't showing it — the coach is good at making sure his guys won't say anything stupid — and that's how it should be. Worry about what you can control.

But, still, they notice. Of course they notice. They just have to be mature enough and not allow it to get to them.

"I pay attention a little bit, but it's not the first thing I do," senior forward Billy White said. "As long as we keep winning, it's going to take care of itself. The ranking will help in the end, but for now, I'm just thankful being in the conversation with the other teams. This is the first time I've been here that we've been looked at."

Senior point guard D.J. Gay, who knows where he's been and where he's going, said it best: "It's something you hear about at other places."

Until this moment, San Diego State is a place that hasn't heard about it.

"It's human nature," sophomore guard Chase Tapley said. "It's a dream come true to be on a team ranked fourth in the nation. It's a great accomplishment. It all depends on us now. We're making history."

And that's a lot. The Aztecs are wrestling with traditional teams from power conferences, a few of them not as good as they're cracked up to be, and the correct notion that West Coast basketball isn't very good right now.

Since the rest of the top teams all figure to lose at least once more, if the Aztecs win out they'll no doubt be the No. 1 team in the nation going into the NCAA

Tournament. And that ranking will mean nothing.

"No. 1," Steve Fisher said. "Right."

With six possible games remaining to see if No. 1 holds up.

## 110 Basketball is now The Show at SDSU

By Dana O'Neil | ESPN.com  
February 23, 2011

Two years ago, Beau Bearden decided he needed an alter ego, so he went to a costume shop and settled on a green getup that would mask his identity yet show his personality.

He decided to be a gecko. Because, of course, beating deep inside every college student is the heart of a gecko.

"Yeah, my parents were proud," Bearden said.

Except here, on the days the otherwise unassuming Bearden becomes Geckshow, no one pays him much attention.

A few rows up is a dude dressed like Buddy, the oversized gnome from "Elf" made famous by Will Ferrell; to the right is the guy in the full hazmat suit, complete with yellow rubber gloves; down on the first row is the girl in a red sparkly tutu with matching red and black sparkly Converse sneakers; and not far from her is the guy who smuggled in a hair pick so he can turn his natural curls into a retro afro.

Someone has an oversized cardboard cutout head of Woody from "Toy Story" and one preteen is dressed like a banana.

A gecko? Please.

**"Welcome to The Show, the nonsensical, whimsical, illogical student section at San Diego State, where no costume is deemed too strange. The name is the unintended brainchild of an outraged alum who, upon spying the goofy antics in the stands, complained, 'You guys think you're the show.'"**

- Dana O'Neil (ESPN.com - "Basketball is now The Show at SDSU")

Welcome to The Show, the nonsensical, whimsical, illogical student section at San Diego State, where no costume is deemed too strange.

The name is the unintended brainchild of an outraged alum who, upon spying the goofy antics in the stands, complained, "You guys think you're the show."

Naturally the irreverent and amused students decided to tweak the angry graduate even more by running with his criticism and calling themselves The Show.

For many a year, The Show was more off-Broadway than Tony-eligible, a smattering of dedicated students who took a two-hour sabbatical from the sunshine of San Diego to park inside the Viejas Arena and cheer on the irrelevant Aztecs.

"You could walk up 15 minutes before a game, pick up your ticket and sit in the front row," said senior Gina Abbamonte, who wants you to know that she is "not a bandwagon fan." She's been coming to games for four years. "That was last year."

Now? Tickets to The Show are harder to come by than those for a red-carpet Hollywood premiere.

The Show is no longer in the stands. The Show is on the court, where San Diego State is 27-1, ranked No. 4 in the country and doing the impossible: birthing a basketball legacy in the 21st century.

"I'm old enough to know that we need to appreciate this," head coach Steve Fisher said. "This sort of thing doesn't come around very often. I tell my guys all the time to take a moment and look around and look at what you've created. I'm not sure they understand how hard it is to do. I know I do."

Twelve years ago, San Diego State's basketball history read more like a short story than an encyclopedia. In nearly 30 years as a Division I program, the Aztecs had made three NCAA tournament appearances and won not a single game.

Only 17 players parlayed their basketball success at SDSU into an NBA draft pick

and only one -- Michael Cage in 1984 -- earned a first-round selection.

Coaches came and coaches went and nothing changed.

And then 12 years ago, former athletic director Rick Bay made a call to Sacramento.

Steve Fisher was, in the eyes of many, damaged goods. Once a fairy-tale story, the first interim coach to lead a team to a national championship, he had become a cautionary tale, the coach who found immediate success and immediate consequences.

A federal investigation revealed that four of his players received more than \$600,000 from a bookmaker.

Michigan forfeited 113 wins and the dreaded asterisk now appears next to the Wolverines' name in the 1992 and 1993 record books, their run to those Final Fours vacated.

Fisher was never implicated by the NCAA, but the stain of the investigation cost him his job and to many, his reputation.

"I never worried he'd get another chance," said Brian Dutcher, who spent 10 years alongside Fisher at Michigan and is now his assistant head coach at San Diego State. "But it's hard to change people's opinions."

Fisher never really tried.

He does not waste a lot of breath or time trying to convince people of his innocence. You either believe him or you don't.

Nor does he shy away from his Michigan years. His sun-splattered office in San Diego is stuffed with Wolverines memorabilia and before he sits down for an interview, he takes a call.

"Hey Jalen," is overheard before he shuts the door.

"It's part of my legacy, part of who I am," Fisher said. "I am very comfortable in my own skin. People who know me know that I've never been dishonest. I've never been unethical or behaved in an unethical manner. I'm proud of what I've done, but this is all part of who I am."

Fisher never worried that he'd get another chance, never thought he would be blackballed from the profession. Part of it, maybe, was naïveté -- "I never had a résumé," he admits. "I thought they'd be naming a building after me at Michigan."

But part of it was the immediate jingling of his phone. A week after he was fired, two schools that he declines to name -- one mid-major, one major -- called and offered him positions.

He declined both.

He wasn't ready.

Instead he went to Sacramento, took a job on the Kings' bench as an assistant. His family stayed back in Ann Arbor. His eldest son, Mark, was at the university and his youngest, Jay, was a sixth-grader. He wasn't going to move them until he was certain he was staying.

And then Bay called.

To some, he would seem the least likely athletic director to reach out to Fisher. Bay is a Michigan man, a one-time All-American wrestler and football player for the Wolverines.

Though both had extensive careers in Ann Arbor -- Bay was a coach and an administrator there for 20 years and Fisher served on Bill Frieder's staff for seven before being tabbed as head coach -- they never met one another officially.

Bay was looking for a splash, a name that would have some instant impact. The Viejas Arena, an open-concourse beauty that seats 12,414, was just two years old and Bay knew, when hitched to the proper coach, the arena could help turn things around.

He had reached out to Rick Majerus, then at Utah, but the Utes were still in the midst of the NCAA tournament and Bay doubted Majerus would leave.

Frieder, who had since relocated to Del Mar, Calif., suggested Bay give Fisher a try.

He did and when Majerus ultimately backed out, Bay immediately offered Fisher a seven-year contract.

"I knew a little about the controversy at Michigan but people that I knew and trusted there told me they thought Steve had gotten a bad deal," said Bay, who resigned from San Diego State in 2003 after a dispute with the university over an internal audit stemming from an investigation of the equipment room. "When I offered him the job, I told him I had to be able to stand up in front of a press conference and be able to say that I had looked into the allegations. He understood that. It was a little awkward for both of us, but I did look into it.

"Looking back on it, Steve I'm sure wanted back into college coaching. I think I needed him and he needed he us."

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This was never going to be a retirement gig.

For starters, Fisher doesn't golf, which would seem borderline illegal here.

And retirement implies leisure. There was nothing leisurely about the San Diego State job. Before Fisher arrived, the Aztecs had one winning season in 14 years, with 29 victories in the three seasons that preceded him, including all of four the season before he arrived.

Maybe it was the sunshine that blinded him to the basketball blight, but somehow Fisher looked around a place where success never took root and saw potential.

"We were selling a dream initially," Fisher admitted.

Some of the dream was visible in the arena, a place so nice the NCAA agreed to use it as a tournament site before it was even built.

But most of it, most of the Aztecs' sale, was built around Fisher.

"I think he wanted to build something again, maybe subliminally even felt like he had something to prove," Bay said. "This was an opportunity, a great challenge to do that. The program could only go up and with that championship ring on his finger, he gave us instant credibility."

In his first season, Fisher spoke at 75 different events (he wrote it down), from coffee houses to rotary clubs. He knocked on the doors of the fraternity houses to talk about his team and stumped in the student cafeterias.

The reward? The Aztecs won one more game -- five -- than the season previous.

There are plenty of things places like San Diego State don't have compared with places like Michigan, but there is one luxury SDSU did offer Fisher: time.

When four wins became just five, no one blinked.

No one demanded that Fisher win immediately because frankly, no one expected it. When your basketball tradition and legacy don't really exist, there aren't exactly standards to live up to.

And so Fisher grew a program slowly. He's a coach and so naturally he wanted success, but he is no spring chicken. He knew that success rarely happens overnight and when it does, it tends to be fleeting.

If his university could be patient, so could he.

"I knew this would be hard because I knew the people who were here before me and they were all very good coaches," Fisher said. "We had to convince high school coaches and AAU coaches to give us a chance. I knew this job wasn't going to be instant gratification."

When an NCAA bid and a 21-win season in Year 3 was followed by a slide to 16, 14 and then 11 wins in the next three seasons, no one demanded Fisher's ouster.

Eventually everyone's patience was rewarded. In the 2005-06 season, San Diego State won 24 games, beginning a now six-year run of 20-win seasons.

And now this, a magical season Fisher rightly described as a "phenomenon."

At the beginning of the season, longtime Associated Press reporter Jim O'Connell called Fisher to tell him his team was ranked in the AP poll for the first time in school history.

"He told me he called only two people, me and Mike Krzyzewski," Fisher said. "I said, 'Well here's the thing. I think right now I might be able to win a governor's race for being ranked 25th and I could definitely be mayor. If Mike is ranked 25th, he's getting fired.'"

There are those who will never buy Fisher, now 65, as a feel-good story. But even his most ardent critics would have a hard time arguing he is cooking the books at San Diego State. His is a team of vagabonds, of junior college kids and players no one else knew quite what to do with.

Malcolm Thomas bounced from Pepperdine to San Diego City College before landing in the San Diego State frontcourt. He averages 11.6 points and 8.2 rebounds per game.

D.J. Gay, the point guard, finished his senior season fifth in the state of California in scoring and 21st nationally. That merited him a handful of looks from West Coast universities. He now scores 12.1 per game, dishes out 3.5 assists and commits just 1.1 turnovers.

Kawhi Leonard, about to become a wealthy man come the NBA draft in June, was labeled a tweener and despite being named California player of the year as a senior, was rated only 56th in the nation. The double-double machine is at 15.2 points and 10.7 rebounds.

Whatever eyeball test they failed to pass individually, together they look awfully pretty. They have all of the parts a college basketball team needs -- the reliable point guard in Gay; the strong inside presence in Thomas, Billy White and Brian Carlwell; 3-point threats in Gay and James Rahon; and a future NBA player in Leonard. San Diego State thrives on defense, allowing only 58.6 points per game, seventh-best in the nation.

The Aztecs' lone blemish is a road loss to rival BYU, a game San Diego State will try to avenge on Saturday at home.

"I thought we'd have a chance to do something special, but no, I never imagined this," admitted Gay.

In home game No. 12 against Utah this season, San Diego State set the record for single-season attendance at the school. The previous mark took 18 games to set.

Sellouts are commonplace, so much so that there wasn't a ticket to be had for the game against Division III Occidental College. On New Year's Eve.

There are scalpers outside of the arena on game day trying to score tickets and the administration has had to institute a new policy for student ticket distribution.

Last year, the university exercised its option and extended Fisher's contract through 2012-13. Athletic director Jim Sterk expects they'll have another extension agreement soon, in addition to better deals for the assistant coaches in order to retain them.

Plus, the school once forced to schedule games wherever and whenever it could, is now in the position of the shoppers. Sterk has increased the program's budget to allow for more guaranteed games.

"We have good problems," Sterk said.

Lost in all of the fun and hoopla is this frightening little nugget of truth: San Diego State has never won an NCAA tournament game in its history, 0 for 6.

Likely to score at worst a 2-seed, the Aztecs will now be expected to win multiple games, which is like going from zero to 60 in a Yugo.

"It's pressure, but what's life without pressure?" Leonard said simply.

The last thing anyone wants is for such a special season to end with a monster-sized March egg.

It would be unfair to say it would undo all the good San Diego State has done. There is a foundation here that didn't exist before, the first steady bricks of a legacy that can be built on and sold to the next generation.

But in the short-term memory world of college athletics, March success tends to leave more of a mark than November through February.

"People will remember this team here no matter how this thing finishes," Fisher said. "This is the first time we've had so much success at the national level. That won't be forgotten. But I want the exclamation point after it."

The lines started forming just after lunchtime, one at the front entrance to the Viejas Arena, the other around the side. Matt Bishop scored a spot around 1 p.m. in one line, and Abbamonte, at 12:20 in the other.

Fisher remembered the first time he saw the pregame line. He thought the fans must have confused the tip-off time for 5 p.m. instead of the typical 7:30.

They hadn't. They just wanted the best seats in The Show for The Show.

This isn't normal. Not here. Camping out for tickets, staking up residence in Krzyzewskiville, is a rite of passage at Duke.

Not at San Diego State. Heck, not in Southern California, where the euphemism for sports apathy is that there is always something better to do.

Sophomore Vaughn Leuzinger sheepishly admitted he had never attended a game until this season. Now he's missed only two and dons one of those full-body neon-colored unitards for the occasion.

He's more rule than exception.

School spirit is soaring and Aztec pride is off the charts.

"I saw some guy walking around campus the other day in an Ohio State T-shirt," senior Natalie Rowan said. "That pissed me off."

It all will hit fever pitch on Saturday when BYU comes to town. Students recite derisive chants toward the Cougars even when BYU isn't the opponent and with so much at stake and Jimmer Fredette on the court, you can expect this campus to be on the edge of bedlam.

Nearly three weeks before the game, students already were laying out their game plan. Tickets are available for pickup on Thursday, necessitating a Wednesday night campout, and the doors open for Saturday's 11 a.m. Pacific tip at 9:30.

"We'll just move out of the line to get tickets and into the line to get in," Bishop said. "Basically we'll camp out Wednesday until Saturday."

The university didn't expect all of this and is sort of making up the rules for the campouts as it goes along.

Right now, tents, couches (some fraternity brothers hauled them out from the nearby houses once this season) and other luxuries of home and dorm are prohibited.

This is San Diego, not Syracuse, so these kids aren't exactly roughing it.

Still, there are an awful lot of hours to kill and so they will pack decks of cards, board games, cell phones, iPods, sleeping bags, lawn chairs, markers, and of course, their imaginations.

No doubt some new game-time creatures and costumes will be born on the macadam outside the arena.

The Show must go on.

Besides insurance advertising, where else can a gecko find work?

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**Sweet serendipity: The story of how SDSU got Fisher**By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 24, 2011

Sitting in sold-out Viejas Arena on Saturday morning for No. 6 San Diego State's titanic clash against No. 7 BYU will be a former wrestler who splits time between Palm Desert and Ann Arbor, Mich., who has traveled to Rwanda, Tanzania, Myanmar, Laos, Tibet, Nepal, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Borneo, Iran, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and North Korea in the last seven years but has not set foot on Montezuma Mesa.

Few people may be more responsible for SDSU's prodigious basketball success.

Without Coach Steve Fisher and his staff, the Aztecs might not have scaled previously unthinkable heights in a college basketball world of haves (not them) and have-nots (them).

Without Rick Bay, Fisher might not have been hired.

"San Diego State has never been so lucky," Bay says.

Bay was SDSU's athletic director from 1995 to 2003 and was responsible for hiring a new men's basketball coach in 1999 to replace Fred Trenkle. It wasn't exactly a cherry job; the Aztecs had 13 losing seasons in the previous 14 years, and the one that wasn't was 15-14. But a new on-campus arena had opened the previous season, and Bay, who had spent time at Michigan, Ohio State and Oregon, dreamed big anyway.

His coaching search included many of the hottest names in college basketball: Rick Majerus, Fran Fraschilla, Quin Snyder, Gene Keady, Dave Bliss, Bill Self, Dan Monson, Jim Harrick.

It did not initially include Steve Fisher.

The name of many candidates would leak out as they toured campus or contacted Bay's office through back channels. One that didn't, at least until now, is the first person Bay interviewed: Ben Howland, the current UCLA coach who was then in his fifth season at Northern Arizona and itching to move on.

The Lumberjacks had a game at Sacramento State late in the season, not long after Trenkle announced he wouldn't be returning. Bay flew to Sacramento and met Howland in his hotel room after the game.

"Ben said, 'I gotta know now, I'm flying to Pittsburgh tomorrow to interview for the job there,'" Bay recalls. "I didn't feel like I could offer him the job without him at least coming to campus. So he flew to Pitt and two days later he had accepted the job there. Ben was in and out of the picture in about 24 hours."

Next on the list was Majerus, the large and larger-than-life coach who had led Utah to the NCAA championship game the previous season.

Bay met with Majerus twice during recruiting trips to the Los Angeles area, once at a swank Beverly Hills hotel, once at a Santa Monica restaurant with then-Padres owner John Moores and SDSU President Stephen Weber. They took Moores' private jet to avoid traffic and, Bay says, Moores wrote a \$25,000 check at dinner for two spots in Michael Jordan's fantasy basketball camp when he learned Majerus helped run it.

Majerus loved San Diego, loved the weather, loved the beaches, loved the Mexican food. Or did he?

"I knew full well from various sources, including his own athletic director, that Rick was a guy who loved to be courted," Bay says. "His name would come up in every coaching search at that time. He was a hot coach. He had a lot of charisma. I knew it was a long shot, and I knew he could lead me down the primrose path.

"But I felt I had to pursue him, to see it through, just in case."

And by now, the media had learned Majerus was the lead candidate. Aztecs fans were frothing at the possibility.

Majerus' agent sent Bay a sample contract with terms that, for a financially-strapped athletic department at a state university with no real basketball history, were brow furrowing. There would be a base salary, and a supplemental salary, and an extra \$50,000 each year on top of that, plus an array of performance bonuses that could potentially double his pay. And then there was the mandatory Reebok endorsement contract.

At Utah, Bay says, Majerus was classified as an independent contractor and not required to attend athletic department staff meetings. He lived in a Marriott hotel a few blocks from campus, with daily maid service. He had a virtually unlimited expense allowance and travel budget. He often parked in a red zone next to the basketball arena.

**"Without Coach Steve Fisher and his staff, the Aztecs might not have scaled previously unthinkable heights in a college basketball world of haves (not them) and have-nots (them). Without Rick Bay, Fisher might not have been hired."**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* -  
"Sweet serendipity: The story of how SDSU got Fisher")

"The salary aside," Bay says, "there was no way I could accommodate some of what he wanted – the independent contractor status, not coming to staff meetings, the expense reports, that sort of thing. I realized this is probably not going to happen and I better have some backup."

So Fran Fraschilla, now an ESPN basketball analyst, entered the fray. So did Quin Snyder, then Mike Krzyzewski's lead assistant at Duke. Phil Mathews (currently an assistant at UCLA) and Bob Williams (now the head coach at UC Santa Barbara) visited campus as well.

Legendary Purdue coach Gene Keady kept calling.

Gonzaga's Dan Monson scheduled a visit and changed his mind at the last moment.

Rhode Island's Jim Harrick and New Mexico's Dave Bliss were mentioned.

Bay asked Tulsa permission to speak with Bill Self, who a year later would go to Illinois and in 2008 win a national championship at Kansas.

Bay set a deadline for an answer from Majerus, but as it drew closer one backup candidate after another withdrew or was otherwise eliminated from contention. There was a week to go now. Majerus was avoiding his calls. Bay was starting to get nervous.

Then he got a call from Bill Frieder, the former Michigan basketball coach whom Bay got to know when he was the Wolverines' wrestling coach.

"Bill said, 'You know, Steve Fisher is a guy you ought to look at,'" Bay says, recounting the conversation. "I said, 'What is he doing?' I have to be honest. I didn't know what he was doing or where he was at. I didn't know he was interested in getting back into college coaching.

"So I called Steve immediately."

Fisher flew to San Diego the next day.

Bay knew Fisher's saga well, having spent 20 years in Ann Arbor as an athlete, coach and administrator but leaving shortly before Fisher arrived as one of Frieder's assistants. Fisher was fired amid allegations that players were receiving money from a powerful booster, despite nothing in an NCAA investigation directly linking Fisher to the illicit loans.

Still, for many athletic directors who might not have followed the scandal as closely as Bay, Fisher represented a toxic commodity.

As Fisher puts it: "I'm sure some people would say, 'We better not. What would the perception be?'"

Bay called another Michigan acquaintance: Bernie Machen, who, as it turned out, was president at Utah at the time. He called not to inquire about Majerus but Fisher. Machen was a provost at Michigan during the scandal and assigned to conduct the university's internal investigation.

"Bernie told me, 'Fisher had nothing to do with it ... I told the university that they should have never fired him in the first place,'" Bay says. "That's all I needed to hear."

Fisher had turned down an offer from South Alabama in 1998 and was close to getting a job in the Big 12 before it fell through just days before the final inter-

view. Instead he took an assistant coaching job with the NBA's Sacramento Kings, where former Michigan recruit Chris Webber was playing, and kept his family in Ann Arbor while he sorted out his career path.

"I loved my year there," Fisher says. "It was basketball, basketball, basketball, basketball."

But the NBA is a volatile business, and the thought of moving his family from city to city was unappealing with his youngest son, Jay, still in high school. San Diego State offered stability, which is another way of saying Bay was dangling a seven-year contract.

"And I think he's just a head coach by nature," says Mark Fisher, an assistant on his father's staff. "Being around a university, being around young kids, just suited him better."

There was one giant if.

IF Majerus didn't take the job. SDSU media relations staff even had a press release drafted announcing Majerus had been hired.

It was never distributed.

Majerus called and politely declined. He would spend five more seasons at Utah before health problems forced a three-year hiatus from coaching. He is now in his fourth season at Saint Louis University, where the Billikens are 10-17.

"In a way, it was a relief," Bay says now. "And Steve really wanted to come. Steve needed us as badly as we needed him. Clearly, there were a lot of jobs out there that were better than San Diego State. We were lucky to get him.

"Maybe he thought it was an entree back into college coaching, maybe he thought it was a stepping stone to another job. But it turned into a love affair."

Twelve seasons later, the Aztecs are 27-1 and ranked sixth nationally in the Associated Press poll. In the ESPN/USA Today coaches poll, they are No. 4 this week and received three first-place votes.

For Bay, it is a sweet slice of a bitter pie. He would resign under pressure in May 2003 when he refused to sign off on a California State University audit critical of his athletic department because he believed the audit was "flawed." Much of his staff left as well, and Bay has never been back since.

Sitting in sold-out Viejas Arena on Saturday, watching the No. 6 Aztecs play No. 7 BYU, may help melt the icy resentment he openly admits still harboring. He is coming at the invitation of current SDSU athletic director Jim Sterk.

"I take a lot of pride in it," Bay says of the ascendancy of Fisher's program. "I have to say the way things ended for me, to see this program do so well over the last few years, I feel a bit vindicated in the sense that I wasn't such a terrible athletic director after all, even though I was fired.

"When you go out the way I did, you can't help but think that everyone thinks you did a terrible job. And this is at least one shining star that contradicts that in some sense."

## 112

### Aztecs fall under BYU's three-point barrage

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
February 27, 2011

The bag of Starburst came flying out of the student section with 33 seconds left, tumbling from the heavens and just missing the BYU bench, sending the multi-colored candies skidding across the Viejas Arena floor.

It was a moment laden with sucrose, and symbolism.

San Diego State's star burst on Saturday afternoon at Viejas Arena, came crashing to Earth, with seventh-ranked BYU's convincing 80-67 victory that was viewed by the first full-national TV audience in school history. And like so many Aztecs shots, the bag of candy missed its intended target.

"You know, I think everybody, the whole school, people are disappointed," SDSU senior forward Billy White said, almost whispering. "But we just have to keep moving forward. It's not the end of the world."

No, but it almost certainly is the end of sixth-ranked SDSU's dream of a No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament and an easy trip up the freeway to Anaheim for the West Regional. Other likely casualties Saturday were the Mountain West Conference regular-season title, a spot in the Top 5 (and maybe Top 10) of the rankings and, perhaps, Steve Fisher's chances of being conference or national coach of the year.

"We played hard, BYU played hard," said Fisher, whose team is 0-2 against the Cougars and 27-0 against everyone else. "We played OK. BYU played better. They are a really, really good basketball team."

Emotionally, the game might have been lost 47 minutes before tipoff, when the Aztecs players obliged the SDSU students – many of whom camped out for days for tickets, then sat in the arena for two hours – by turning the layup line into an impromptu dunk contest. Then the players gathered at the free-throw line, whooping and hollering and jumping and dancing while the crowd roared ... and BYU players methodically went through pregame stretches.

"It's great to be excited and hyped before the game," captain D.J. Gay said, "but you just have to make sure it carries over to the court."

Did it?

"Apparently not enough," he said.

Tactically, the game might have been lost a month ago in Provo, Utah.

Jimmer Fredette scored 43 that night, and the Aztecs left with "You got Jim-mered" chants from 22,700 in the Marriott Center ringing in their ears. Intent on not letting the kid from Glens Falls, N.Y., drop another 40-spot, the Aztecs spent the week scheming and prepping for him – working tirelessly in practice on how to guard him, how to double-team him on BYU's endless array of ball screens, how to keep him from getting to the rim or pulling back for one of his trademark area-code jumpers.

"When we watched film, it was nothing but Jimmer, Jimmer, Jimmer," Gay said.

And the Aztecs indeed stopped him, the term, "stop," in this case, meaning 25 points – two under his nation-leading average – on 8-of-23 shooting.

The problem wasn't Jimmer. The problem was everyone else.

In Provo last month, the rest of the Cougars scored 28 points. On Saturday, they scored 55.

"I've been telling everybody, all the media, all year long, that it's just not me," said Fredette, who had nine assists, one shy of his career high. "It's our team. I keep telling them that if they want to double-team me, I'm going to try to get the ball to my teammates and they are going to make shots.

"That's what makes our team good. I'm glad that more people were able to see that."

Good thing no one from BYU threw anything out the stands.

The accuracy of the Cougars was at once impressive and frightening. Noah Hartsock, a balding forward (students chanted, "Rogaine, Rogaine," before the game) who averages 8.8 points, didn't miss a shot until 6:39 left and finished with 15 points on 6-of-7 shooting. Charles Abouo, a junior from Ivory Coast who shoots 30-percent behind the three-point line, made 4-of-5 and had 18 points. Sophomore Stephen Rogers came off the bench in the second half and – why not? – promptly drained a three, too.

In all, the Cougars were 14-of-24 behind the arc, or 58.3 percent. Inside the arc, they made only 13 shots and were 38.2 percent.

Fredette connected on half his eight attempts from distance and actually brought down his team's percentage. Everyone else was 10-of-16, a scintillating 62.5 percent.

"It's frustrating, of course, when they knock down shots," Gay said. "When you give (Fredette) that much attention, he has no choice but to find the open man .... And his court vision has gotten better. He's finding the open the man."

The Aztecs took a 2-0 lead on a fallaway jumper by Kawhi Leonard (17 points, 13 rebounds) 21 seconds into the game, and the Madhouse on the Mesa was in full throat. But they would never lead again, and Viejas Arena would never be that loud again.

After trailing by as many as 12, the Aztecs closed to three at intermission. On their first possession of the second half, they ran a new play installed specifically for the game that was supposed to get Malcolm Thomas a dunk off a lob from Billy White over the back of the defense.

White threw a bounce pass instead. Turnover.

And that's how the rest of the game went – the Aztecs getting right there but never quite making the proper connection. Over the final 10 minutes, they never drew closer than seven points.

"When they had to make a basket, somebody made a basket and it was never the same somebody, and that's the mark of a really good team," Fisher said. "I told our team: 'BYU is Final Four good.' I don't know that our guys liked to hear that.

"And then I said, 'We are, too. But today, they were the better team.' And they were. No excuses."

#### Notes

Next up for SDSU is a trip to play Wyoming on Tuesday instead of the usual Wednesday slot ... The loss ended the Aztecs' 18-game home winning streak. Over the last 44 games at Viejas Arena, they are 1-3 against BYU and 40-0 against everyone else ... Gay had another quiet game against BYU, not scoring until midway through the second half and finishing with six points on 2-of-7 shooting. He had two points on 0-of-7 shooting at BYU last month and is shooting just 25.4 percent against the Cougars in his career ... One of the signs in the SDSU student section: "Jimmer wishes he was Gay." Another: "Hi Mom(s)." Another: "It's going to be a long bike ride home." ...

Former SDSU athletic director Rick Bay attended the game and was introduced during a timeout in the first half ... The Supercuts promotion, where a blindfolded contestant tries to find a banner laid on the floor with the help of the crowd, turned into a marriage proposal. When the woman removed the blindfold, her boyfriend was there on one knee, holding an engagement ring ... Journalists from several major newspapers, magazines and websites were at the game, along with 25 NBA scouts.

#### 113

#### Dave Rose or Steve Fisher for national coach of the year?

By Dick Harmon | Deseret News  
March 1, 2011

Should BYU coach Dave Rose be in consideration for the national coach of the year honors?

Yes.

But is he?

Many think he should be, including TCU's coach Dave Christian, who called Rose a national candidate last week in Fort Worth.

If the measuring stick is San Diego State coach Steve Fisher, who has been considered one of the frontrunners all season long, and deservedly so, then there is little question Rose belongs in the discussion.

In a sentimental sense, Fisher is older, more seasoned and has coached in a Final Four at Michigan. He has also battled prostate cancer. Rose, in his sixth season as a head coach, as also battled pancreatic cancer and, like Fisher, is a remarkable case for inspiration as a husband, father and coach.

In Saturday's CBS broadcast, the network used a graphic showing the national coach of the year candidates. Fisher was there. Rose was not.

Fisher entered this season with five returning starters including MWC player of the year candidate Kawhi Leonard and seniors D.J. Gay, Billy White and Malcolm Thomas. Add Chase Tapley in the mix and you have a perfect preseason mindset by scribes that the Aztecs would be special. They are.

The media picked SDSU to win the MWC title. The ballot was strong. The Aztecs had a lot of support, 21 of 30 first-place votes. The media voted BYU second with 5 first place votes. New Mexico received 3 first place votes.

Now consider Rose. BYU entered the season without big center Chris Miles and one of the school's most prolific career 3-point shooters Jonathan Tavernari,

who were seniors last year. He also lost LDS mission-bound Tyler Haws, a freshman starter who was Mr. Basketball in Utah out of Lone Peak High School and a proven mid-range jumper phenom. Rose returned just three starters, post player Noah Hartsock and senior guards Jimmer Fredette and Jackson Emery.

Rose's BYU squad was not picked to win the MWC basketball title. For the past two weeks, they've received No. 1 votes on the Associated Press poll.

At this stage of the season, Fisher and Rose are both 27-2 overall and both boast RPI rankings in the Top 10.

But who had to do the better coaching job, Fisher with five returning starters, or Rose, who returned just three?

In the final week of league play, BYU is the MWC leader with a 13-1 record; SDSU stands 12-2.

In head-to-head showdowns this season, Rose is 2-0 against Fisher, a sweep by a combined 26-point margin in Provo and San Diego. This comes despite MWC schedulers giving SDSU and Fisher a break with an empty schedule the week of the Aztec game with the Cougars. That means rest and preparation.

This past weekend in San Diego was the most important athletic event in Aztec history — a nationally televised game of a No. 4 ranked squad against a No. 7 Cougar squad. BYU stole the moment. Just took it away.

Fisher has glass power players; Rose has running 3-point shooters. Fisher's team is 55th in rebounding per game; BYU is 13th. SDSU is 39th in field goal percentage; BYU is 5th in scoring average.

In three key rating matrixes released on Monday, this is how the team's were ranked: BYU was No. 1 in Jerry Palm's RPI; SDSU was No. 4. In Jeff Sagarin's power ratings, BYU was No. 3; SDSU No. 4. In Ken Pomeroy's rankings, BYU was No. 6; SDSU 11.

BYU does have Jimmer Fredette; SDSU does not.

In both games, the Jimmer factor loomed huge. It posed significant challenges for Fisher. Does he single cover Fredette and see the All-American score 43, or does he double him, put length on him, trade off in shifts with three or four players and allow 25 points and 9 assists.

But the Fredette factor isn't always easy for Rose. He can't just turn his team over to Fredette and let him do what he wants. He has to balance a fragile line between feeding his star enough to let him make plays and find where he'll be effective while keeping other players hungry, focused and happy.

That is not easy. BYU is a squad of high character guys, nice young men. But they have egos and feelings, and they hear it from their families when Jimmer takes all the shots. Do not doubt this.

So, who had the bigger coaching challenge this year, Rose or Fisher?

Who did more with what they had, what they were expected to do to this point in the season?

Fisher had a four-month run on Rose to push his candidacy and legitimize his role and has done an outstanding job. He's captured the nation's attention and been prominently featured everywhere he's gone.

Rose? He's been in the shadow of Jimmer, in a way. It's been like a runaway freight train and that in itself is a challenge Fisher has not had to manage, either on a local or national stage, as Fredette's public persona has taken on a life of its own. Still, Rose has to coach, come up with game plans and strategy, and be in control. In that regard, he's excelled, his team now ranked No. 3 in the USA Today Coaches' Poll.

Rose may not receive the consideration by national pundits he deserves, but he doesn't seek it. If you take these two men and consider what was expected and what's been delivered ...

It isn't over by a long shot. There's a lot of meat on the bone with this final week and post season yet to roll.

But it is time post-season honors are tabulated and this one is an interesting take.

## 114-115

Rose? Fisher? Someone else deserve it more?

And who would that be?

Maybe Texas coach Rick Barnes, who started unranked but has been Top Five.

But is his case that more significant than Fisher or Rose, who do not get BCS money?

It's a good debate.

## 114

**Aztecs bounce back with record win at Wyoming**

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 2, 2011

This has been a season full of signature moments, of Billy White's block off the backboard at TCU, of the 14 points in 71 seconds against Wichita State, of overcoming the 22-point deficit against Wisconsin-Green Bay, of D.J. Gay's dramatic buzzer-beater at Colorado State.

Add another to the list:

Late in the first half at Wyoming on Tuesday night, with the clock ticking inside five seconds, Malcolm Thomas set a ball screen for Gay, then sliced down the free-throw lane. Gay's pass hit him in stride.

Thomas elevated and threw down a thunderous dunk over what seemed like the entire Wyoming defense.

It was a mere two points in a 85-58 victory by No. 9 San Diego State against a mess of a Wyoming team, but it provided an exclamation point to an unspoken statement by a team still smarting from Saturday's debilitating loss to BYU.

"I was anxious to see how we'd perform," SDSU coach Steve Fisher said.

Nine dunks and 85 points later, he had his answer.

"Let people write us off," said center Brian Carlwell, who came off the bench for a career-high 15 points and eight rebounds. "We're still there. If you start to overlook us, we'll sneak up behind you and sucker punch you."

"It shows that we have a lot of character," guard Chase Tapley said. "A lot of teams, after a loss like that, would put their heads down. We didn't."

Understand that you might beat Wyoming by 25 or 30 on your home court. But you don't just saunter into Arena-Auditorium, like gunslingers into a saloon, and lay a 27-point smackdown on the Pokes. (Ask BYU, which a month ago led by a single point here inside two minutes to go.)

SDSU had won just six of 30 previous trips to Laramie. Its biggest margin of victory was 13 points.

It also was SDSU's largest margin of victory ever in a Mountain West Conference road game.

"We've had a hard time winning here, period," Fisher said. "So any win here is a big win."

The Aztecs (28-2, 13-2) started the game how you might expect a sea-level team playing at 7,222 feet three days after arguably the most devastating loss in school history. They were flat.

They opened with a basket, then came up empty on eight of their next nine possessions and trailed 10-4. Then Gay, the man who earlier this season went 177 straight minutes without a turnover, had two a mere 34 seconds apart. The announced crowd (or should we call it gathering?) of 4,518 leaned forward in their yellow and brown seats and allowed themselves to dream for a moment.

But only a moment. Five minutes later, the Aztecs had the lead and never relinquished it. A 23-5 run, much of it with Kawhi Leonard on the bench in foul trou-

ble, made it 37-20 at the half.

Of course, they also led by 17 here a year ago – by 14 inside five minutes – and ended up losing.

"I reminded them at halftime about that," Fisher said.

On this night, with these players, with this steeled resolve, a 17-point lead became 21 which became 25 which became 27. Wyoming's previous biggest home loss this season had been 17.

Fisher has talked all season about his team's depth, only to shorten his bench in the thick of the conference race. But at 7,222 feet – a sign outside the locker room asks, "How's your oxygen?" – and players gasping for breath after two trips down the court, you don't have much choice.

Fisher went nine deep in the first half with the game still close, and all nine guys scored. Seven had at least one rebound. Six had at least one assist.

Bench scoring: 35-8, SDSU.

And that was without maybe his most trusted sub, junior forward Tim Shelton, missing the morning shoot-around and then sitting on the bench during the game in a black sweat suit. Shelton, Fisher said, has strep throat.

"Before embarking on this great life adventure, Mehdi Cheriet's father told him about deux lapins, the cautionary tale of "Two Rabbits." The moral of which is, the man who chases two rabbits at once is certain to catch neither."

- Chris Jenkins (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Cheriet opted to pursue two rabbits, er, passions")

Wyoming (10-19, 3-12) had committed to running and pressing the entire 40 minutes under interim coach Fred Langley, who took over after Heath Schroyer was fired three weeks ago. But it's hard to run when your speedy point guard (Hoover High alum JayDee Luster) is sick, has a hip flexor and gets three fouls in five first-half minutes. And it's hard to press when the other team isn't taking the ball out of the net.

"A really, really poor effort by the Cowboys," Langley said. "To be honest, I thought the product we put on the floor was not a very good product. It's inexcusable."

The Aztecs held Wyoming to a season-low 20 points in the first half on 7-of-26 shooting (26.9 percent). Over the final nine minutes of the half, the Cowboys scored five points. Over the final 3:40, zero.

Then came Thomas' dunk.

"Only an athlete like Malcolm could have made that play," Fisher said. "That would get a 10 in the NBA dunk contest. It wasn't over a car, but he jumped over some people."

**Notes**

Next up for SDSU is Senior Night against Colorado State, on Saturday night at 7 at Viejas Arena ... The 52 points in the paint is the fourth time this season with 50-plus ... The 13th conference win of the year equals the most in school history (2005-06) ... The Aztecs shot 52.5 percent (32-of-61), winning for the 17th consecutive time when they shoot over 50 percent ... About the only thing the Aztecs didn't do well was shoot threes. They were 2-of-13 (15.4 percent), meaning they shot 62.5 percent inside the arc ...

Thomas had two blocks to give him 118 for his career, tying him with Michael Cage for second place on the all-time school blocks list behind Leonard Allen (214). Cage did it in 112 games, Thomas in 64 ... The Aztecs have now gone 48 games without back-to-back losses ... Luster, who hit the key three-pointer in last year's win against the Aztecs, finished with zero points in 14 minutes. Wyoming's other player with local ties, Escondido High alum Joe Hudson, had three points in 11 minutes.

## 115

**Cheriet opted to pursue two rabbits, er, passions**

By Chris Jenkins | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 4, 2011

Before embarking on this great life adventure, Mehdi Cheriet's father told him about deux lapins, the cautionary tale of "Two Rabbits." The moral of which is, the man who chases two rabbits at once is certain to catch neither.



With one eye on a biology degree and another on basketball, Cheriet weighed his rabbits and set off after both, an odyssey that sent him from his hometown of Tarare, France, to ... Yuma, Ariz.? (More on that later.) Ultimately, it brought Cheriet to San Diego State, where he's given a French definition to the label "student-athlete."

"I guess my dad was right," says Cheriet, "because I am not doing extremely good in either."

Cheriet punctuates his self-deprecation with laughter. To the contrary, too, Cheriet would seem to be doing extremely well as an SDSU student. Carrying a 3.5 grade-point average, the fifth-year senior is only months away from receiving his B.S. in biology — a difficult enough quest for anybody without the additional demands of Division I athletics, even more challenging for someone to whom English was very much a foreign language.

As inhospitable as the student section at Viejas Arena is toward visitors from different schools, though, the raucous members of "The Show" have made Cheriet feel quite at home in his time on Montezuma Mesa.

"Every time I score, they sing 'Frère Jacques' for me," says Cheriet, beaming as he sits in the empty arena after an Aztecs practice. "And when the crowd is singing for me, I look up and always see three French flags, (pointing) two over there and one over there. I love it. I would not want to be on the other team here, because the crowd here is absolutely amazing."

Cheriet, regrettably, has been relegated to mostly spectator status as well. Rated ninth in the United States, the Aztecs' basketball program has grown so talented, it's become tougher and tougher for the 6-foot-9, 225-pound Cheriet to get off the bench and into games.

The higher the Aztecs have climbed in the rankings, the closer they've gotten to the postseason and the less playing time Cheriet has gotten. One minute, maybe two. For three straight games he didn't play at all, until he got in for 10 minutes during Tuesday's blowout over Wyoming. His scoring average this season is 1.8 points per game.

"I am very happy to be here, very happy to be in this situation, and I have learned much both on and off the floor," says Cheriet, whose last home game will be Saturday night against Colorado State. "I just wish I could play more. I cannot hide it: I'm very frustrated. But I understand that there are very good players here."

Cheriet has been a good enough player that in between his first and second seasons at Arizona Western College, he performed with the under-20 French national team in the European Basketball Championships. Chosen by the National Junior College Coaches Association to play in its national All-Star Game, Cheriet had a solid first year at SDSU, starting twice and scoring in double figures in four games, but he redshirted last year to concentrate more on his studies.

"I wanted to pass my hardest classes, like organic chemistry and biochemistry, so this year I could focus more on basketball," he says. "I have to tell you, I loved it. I met classmates for study, spent nights in the library until 6 a.m., solving problems."

The biggest problem Cheriet had before getting to San Diego State was getting to San Diego State. Brought to the attention of Aztecs head coach Steve Fisher and assistant head coach Brian Dutcher by a professional player in Europe who had been with the two in their previous life at Michigan, Cheriet barely spoke any English, but he loaded up in language classes after enrolling in an international-students program at Arizona Western in the outpost that is Yuma.

Getting there was no simple matter, either.

"A horrible experience, horrible," says Cheriet. "I flew from Lyon (France) to London, then a 10-hour flight to Phoenix, a middle seat with a big American guy next to me. Terrible! Then I missed my plane to Yuma. I'm tired. I don't speak English. I do not know what to do.

"Four women who worked for the Marines in Yuma took care of me. They said, 'Follow us,' rented a car and took me to Yuma. I slept the whole way. They could have done anything, could have killed me, but at that point I do not care. And that's still my first impression of American people, those four women, very welcoming.

"It was the same with the people in Yuma. That was a rich experience. I loved it."

His mission upon arrival in the United States was to play basketball, but also to become the first in his working-class family to earn a college diploma. The warning from his father (Ali) was not to give up school for basketball, or vice versa, but to take an easier course of study than biology to facilitate the hoops. He'll return to Europe with hopes of playing the game as a pro, but also equipped to pursue a career in the biotech field.

"I came here half-French and half-Algerian," says Cheriet. His impressive grasp of both English and math is such now, a playful expression crosses his face as he adds, "And now I am half-American, too."

## 116

### Aztecs' Gay sets his own status quo

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 5, 2011

D.J. Gay's first basketball team was at Branford Rec Center near his home in the Sun Valley neighborhood of Los Angeles. He was 8. His team won the league and he was one of its best players, but he wasn't chosen for all-stars.

That season the all-star team was selected by Coach Don.

Don Gay. His father.

"Says D.J.: 'I told myself, 'This will never happen to me again. I will never not make another team.' That's where it started.'"

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* -  
"Aztecs' Gay sets his own status quo")

"He was borderline and I didn't pick him," Don Gay says. "He cried like a baby. But that summer, all he did was have a basketball in his hand. We had a little basketball court behind the house. He'd get up at 7 o'clock and be bouncing the ball. His mother would say, 'D.J., stop, people are sleeping.'

"The rec center opened at 9. Ten minutes to 9, he'd be waiting outside the gym for it to open. This was a kid, now. But he was driven, driven to get better."

Says D.J.: "I told myself, 'This will never happen to me again. I will never not make another team.' That's where it started."

Five pages are devoted to San Diego State's captain and senior point guard in the basketball media guide, with photos, particulars (he's 6-feet, 170 pounds), interests (he likes camping and sushi), statistics, charts and an almost game-by-game narrative of his illustrious career on Montezuma Mesa that arrives at its last home game tonight.

It is the final line of his lengthy bio, though, that pries open the window into Darnley Earl Gay III:

... a women's studies major at San Diego State.

There are currently 59 undergraduates at SDSU majoring in women's studies. Fifty-seven are women.

"The first time I say it, that I'm majoring in women's studies, people don't believe me," says Gay, who is on track to graduate in May. "They never believe me."

Gay — D.J. is short for Darnley Jr. — took an introductory women's studies course as part of SDSU's diversity requirement. He liked it. And when it came time to choose a major during his sophomore year, he did what he had been doing all his life and made a decision based not on societal norms or stereotypes or preconceptions.

"I knew what I was getting myself into," says Gay, whose grandmother recently retired as a professor and associate director of the campus women's center at the University of Pennsylvania. "I think I hesitated for about a day and then I was like, 'Screw it.' In all the other classes, you learn numbers and (facts) and stuff like that. I felt women's studies was a class where I learned morals and life lessons.

"It changed my whole way of thinking. It made me realize how ignorant I was to some of the things going on in society."

Doreen Mattingly is a professor and the undergraduate adviser in the Department of Women's Studies. She's been at SDSU for 16 years, and she can't re-

member a football or men's basketball player — the stereotypical jock — picking it as their major.

"Any man who decides to be a women's studies major is exceptional," Mattingly says. "It means somebody is unique, is not driven by peer pressure, is willing to be a minority in a way that can be uncomfortable at times, is brave."

"Hardly anybody doesn't get grief for their choice, male or female. I think there's a fair bit of homophobia that goes into it, that women will be labeled as lesbian or men will be labeled as homosexual."

Gay shrugs. He doesn't care what people think. Never has.

"I was always a different kid," he says.

He grew up in a house where tattoos and piercings are forbidden (and he still has neither). He doesn't swear. He doesn't pump his fist or gesticulate when, during pregame introductions, 12,414 in Viejas Arena shriek in unison: "Deeeee Jaaaaay Gaaaaay." He likes to spend time at SDSU's turtle pond, listening to his iPod, reflecting, thinking.

"He's just one of those guys that there's something different about him, you know?" says forward Tim Shelton, his roommate. "I would definitely use the word 'original' to describe him. You don't find people like that. He's one of those kids who scored 30-plus points in high school and he'll never tell you."

As a freshman Gay went across town to Cleveland High, which had strong athletic programs, and was a star on the junior varsity. They were expecting big things from him.

Then, against his mother's wishes, he transferred to John H. Francis Polytechnic High — not far from the Burbank airport — because he wanted to play with the neighborhood kids.

Poly had one famous basketball alum, Hall of Fame guard Gail Goodrich, but that was 50 years ago. When Gay arrived, the Parrots hadn't won a league title in nearly two decades. According to school district statistics, the student body was 90 percent Hispanic and 1.5 percent African-American.

"Everywhere we went, we were laughed at," Gay says. "We would go and play other teams that were predominantly black, and we would show up with a bunch of Hispanic guys and me. We would walk into the gym and everybody would be like, 'Are you serious?' They would make racial jokes. I heard it all."

"But as I fought through that and got through that, I was able to accept who I am as a person. People would say, 'Why do you play there? You're the only black guy on the team.' And I would say, 'I don't see color. I just see people.'"

He also saw opportunity.

In his senior season, Poly went 24-6 and won the league. He averaged 29.4 points and 12 times scored 30-plus points, including a school-record 56 one night. Now there are two retired numbers in the Poly gym.

"He took the team and put it on his back," Don Gay says, "and he took them from nowhere to somewhere."

The same logic applied to his college choice. USC and Arizona State were among the schools recruiting him. He picked SDSU, which had never won a game in the NCAA Tournament and, until this season, had never been ranked.

"When I told people I was going to San Diego State, they were like, 'Why, why why?'" Gay says. "I saw something that nobody else saw."

He spent his first two seasons primarily as an off-guard while Richie Williams, the school's all-time steal leader and No. 2 in career assists, ran the point. When Williams left, there were whispers — loud enough for him to hear — that Gay would never make the transition to point guard.

"I told people, 'Don't fret, don't worry, we're in capable hands,'" SDSU coach Steve Fisher says.

How capable? Fisher named Gay captain for this season without bothering to take a team vote.

Gay is SDSU's career leader in games played (133) and victories (tonight would be No. 100). This season he averages 34.6 minutes per game, went an incomprehensible 177 minutes without a turnover and leads the Mountain West Conference in assist-to-turnover ratio at 4.38-to-1. He's one of 10 finalists for the Bob Cousy Award, given annually to the nation's top point guard.

Number of games missed in four years: zero.

Not surprised is the coach who left him off the Branford Rec all-stars.

"I remember one time in high school, in the playoffs, he hit a three-pointer at the buzzer to win," Don Gay says. "All the students ran on the court and picked him up on his shoulders. I ran down to congratulate him and he said, 'Oh, Dad, let's go home.' It was no big deal for him."

"He said, 'That's what I do.'"

## 117 Students storm court as Aztecs claim piece of MWC title

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 6, 2011

The baskets in Viejas Arena no longer have nets.

One after another, the San Diego State players climbed an orange ladder with a pair of scissors and cut off a section of white, nylon net. Then came the staff. Then university president Stephen Weber. Then coach Steve Fisher.

**"This is a moment they will have forever," Fisher said. "Ten years from now looking back, that's theirs."**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Students storm court as Aztecs claim piece of MWC title")

Ascending from a sea of jubilant students into a swirl of red and white confetti, smiling, waving, pumping a fist, opening the scissors, then hearing the sweet sound of success.

Snip, snip, snip.

Technically it was to celebrate a Mountain West Conference co-championship after Saturday night's 66-48 win against Colorado State in the final regular-season game put the ninth-ranked Aztecs into a first-place tie with BYU at 14-2.

But really, it was more than that. The love-fest in Viejas Arena was for a magical season, for a dedicated group of seniors, for a team, for a university, for a city. And for glorious possibility.

The season doesn't end here. In many respects, it is just beginning. Next week is the conference tournament in Las Vegas. The week after that, the NCAA Tournament.

As the nets came down, the chants cranked up: "Final Four, Final Four."

"Before the season we all set goals as a team, and this is something we can check off on our list," captain D.J. Gay said of the regular-season conference title, the school's second in 33 years. "It's been a great season and a magical one so far, but we know it's not over yet."

"We can't settle for this. It feels good in the moment, but we still have a lot of work to do."

The night began with an emotional Senior Night ceremony. The five seniors — Gay, Billy White, Malcolm Thomas, Brian Carlwell, Mehdi Cheriet -- were escorted onto the court by their families and presented with a framed red jersey, then posed for a photo together with the frames at their feet.

Two hours later, the five were on the court together again as the final seconds ticked away and 2,800 students poured down the aisles onto the floor, water cascading over a breached dam.

In between, the Aztecs (29-2) showed why they are a single game — Thursday at 6 p.m. against Utah in the quarterfinals of the MWC tournament — from the unfathomable prospect of a 30-win season at a school that, before last fall, had never appeared in either of college basketball's major polls.

They were 2-of-18 behind the three-point line. And they beat a 19-11 Colorado State team by 18 points anyway.

"It shows how good we are," said Gay, who was 1-of-9 behind the arc. "Every team is going to have an off night. But to win and shoot like that ... You're going to have to win in different ways. And that's what is so good about our team, that we can win in different ways."

Saturday's formula was to make their first six shots and take a 15-6 lead, then go 3-of-16 the rest of the half and be tied at halftime. To make their first three-point attempt, then miss 10 in a row against CSU's 2-3 zone.

Colorado State had the ball to open the second half, Andy Ogide scored inside and the Rams were up 29-27. Senior Night was quickly becoming a senior moment for the Aztecs.

Three minutes later, it was 37-29, SDSU, and Rams coach Tim Miles was deciding whether to burn another timeout trying to prevent the inevitable.

Different ways to win: making 18-of-19 free throws, having a 25-7 margin in points off turnovers, outscoring the Rams 10-0 on the fast break, blocking eight shots, holding the nation's 21st-best shooting team to a mere 36.7 percent (18-of-49).

The lead grew to 18, and with five minutes to go the students were waving French flags and all of Viejas Arena was chanting, "We want Mehdi," for the little-used Frenchman. Cheriet finally got in with 1:13 left, got the ball in the post, spun and ... lost it out of bounds.

On the next possession, he missed again, got the rebound, shot again, missed again – only for the officials to whistle Colorado State for goaltending and count the basket.

It was that kind of night.

Seconds later, Cheriet and his teammates were bobbling in an ocean of jubilant students. Then confetti was falling from the ceiling, then someone was bringing out an orange ladder, then someone had a pair of scissors.

"This is a moment they will have forever," Fisher said. "Ten years from now looking back, that's theirs."

#### Notes

All of Viejas Arena was chanting "One more year, one more year," when sophomore (and possibly NBA bound) Kawhi Leonard went to the line late in the first half. The student section chanted the same thing in the second half for senior Brian Carlwell, who has said he intends to apply for a sixth season of eligibility ... A sign in the student section: "Open season on Rams." ...

The 14 conference victories are a school record ... It was SDSU's ninth straight win against CSU ... It was the 13th sellout of the season, compared to eight total through the first 13 years of the building's history ... Colorado State was trying to reach 20 wins for seventh season in school history and first time since 1998 ... The Rams were 18-7 overall and 8-3 in the MWC (and getting votes in the Associated Press Top 25) before losing four of their final five regular-season games ...

Things got a little nasty when Adam Nigon was called for an intentional foul on Thomas, who had to be restrained by teammates after sharing a few words with Nigon ... The night's lone missed free throw was by Leonard, who was 9-of-10 from the line ... Leonard's double-double (17 points, 12 rebounds) was his 21st of the season and 38th of his career ... SDSU had only one foul through the game's first 15 minutes.

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#### Nice win for seniors, but now the real challenges begin

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 6, 2011

The Show People — those mad student bodies who help make Viejas Arena the loudest place on earth with people inside of it — tobogganed onto the court en masse. You would have thought San Diego State not only had won an NCAA basketball title, but had brought about permanent peace in the Middle East and a cure for the common cold.

It was a good Saturday night. It was senior night. It was, as usual, about as much fun as you can have around here between 7 pm and 9 pm. And the ninth-ranked Aztecs men did what they had to do to take care of feisty Colorado State 66-48 and claim a share of the Mountain West Conference championship.

The win was special. It raised State's record to 29-2, which ties them with Kansas for the best in America. The game itself was not. It could have been midseason in its intensity and, face it, the Aztecs could have played a whole lot better than they did -- especially in the first half.

State opened the game hot, making its first five shots. The hosts got up 15-6, the crowd was going nuts, and it appeared to be over before the first media timeout. But the Aztecs then entered a stretch where they couldn't have thrown the ball into a forest if they were leaning up against a tree.

Frustrated a bit by the Rams' zone, they missed eight straight shots and CSU went on a 13-0 run. But Aztecs coach Steve Fisher, who had to be concerned, started subbing freely and SDSU managed to stabilize a bit and tie it 27-27 at the break.

"I was (concerned)," Fisher would say following the most successful regular season in school history. "I said (at halftime) we're in a 20-minute game now."

And his kids responded. CSU led but once following intermission, 29-29, the Aztecs pushed it up by 10 on a D.J. Gay three and following that it was nothing more than easy riding. The Aztecs suddenly had found their arms and legs, and when they do that, there aren't many teams that can handle them.

They forced 10 second-half turnovers and made half their shots (14 of 28) after a dismal first 20 minutes shooting the ball, especially from three-point range (2-of-18 on the night).

"We've had all sorts of ways we've won and all sorts of key contributors," Fisher said.

There were many in this one. Forward Billy White, one of the five seniors (forward Malcolm Thomas, Brian Carlwell, Mehdi Cheriet and Gay being the others), led the way in the second half, finishing with 13 points. And sophomore Kawhi Leonard had his usual double-double, with 17 points and 12 rebounds.

Fisher may have been nervous, but through it all, you never really had a sense that State was going to blow this game. They're pretty good about winning these things.

The Rams aren't stiff. For a long time CSU looked like the third team that would represent the Mountain West in the big tournament. But it hasn't been the same in recent weeks. At one time the Rams were 18-6. They're 19-11 now, and if they don't win the MWC Tournament, NIT is as good as they're going to get.

It doesn't mean anything right now, but Saturday two more teams ranked in front of them -- Duke and Purdue -- lost, as did one lose behind them (Louisville, ranked 11th). What's important is next week, when they head off to Las Vegas for the conference tournament.

They'll be seeded second and play Utah Thursday, and this is one year they don't have to win it to advance to the NCAAs. But a victory or two would help with their eventual seeding.

If they get to 30 wins, they deserve a No. 2 seed in the NCAAs no matter what they do the rest of the week in Vegas, because, plain and simple, there aren't eight teams in the country better than they are.

You can see it in their step, see it in their confidence. They're better athletically than every team they play. Against a team such as Colorado State, it isn't close. It's just that there isn't much in-between with them.

There are times when they don't do much at all and times they go on these stupendous runs. There are times when they can shoot from the outside and times they can't. Saturday night they couldn't. There are times when they can shoot free throws and times they can't. Saturday night they could, making 18 of 19 from the line.

They are what they are, imperfect, but so hard to play because they normally defend and rebound so well. CSU did well on the offensive boards \_ a rarity against State \_ and outrebounded the Aztecs on the night 30-29, another rarity. But the Rams managed to hit just 18 of their 49 shots (36.7 percent).

That's San Diego State. They beat you one way one night, another way the next. But one constant remains: No matter what, they beat you.

### 119 Aztecs' Thomas draws inspiration from daughter

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 9, 2011

San Diego State forward Malcolm Thomas walked out for Senior Night festivities before Saturday's game against Colorado State, a sold-out crowd at Viejas Arena roaring, cameras flashing, his mother and sister on either side of him. In his right arm, wearing a red and black Aztecs cheerleader outfit, was the other woman in his life.

Her name is Mikeala.

She is 16 months old.

She is his daughter.

It was a bold statement in an era when unmarried college athletes often keep children from public view or scrutiny, either out of neglect or shame, or both.

"I wanted to walk out with her and share the experience with her," Thomas says. "I know she doesn't really know what's going on, but I wanted her to be there. It was important to me."

Thomas, 22, is the son of a basketball player, a 6-foot-7 forward by the same name who was considered the nation's top junior college player at Moberly Area (Mo.) Community College in the early 1980s and then became an honorable mention All-American at Missouri after averaging 17.4 points and 8.2 rebounds as a senior. He was selected in the sixth round of the 1985 draft by the Los Angeles Clippers, didn't survive training camp and moved back to Colombia, Mo.

On Nov. 15, 1988, he had a son.

"My dad was busy with basketball, but he wasn't always around," says Thomas, who would play at Crawford High, Pepperdine and San Diego City College before coming to SDSU last year. "I've always had women raise me, my mother and aunts, and when you're raised by women you're reminded of the kind of father you don't want to be. I don't want to be that dad who's never around."

"When I knew I was going to have a kid, I told Mikeala's mother, 'I'm not going to be like him.'"

Asked how much contact he has with his father now, Thomas says: "No contact." In the SDSU media guide, under the personal section, it merely says Thomas is the "son of Lori Dawson."

"I think Malcolm wants to be what he wanted as a child," SDSU coach Steve Fisher says. "He wants to be a dad. He wants to make sure his daughter has a dad in her life. I'm proud of him for that. He's accepted what it means to be a father, the responsibility of being a parent."

"He's the kind of young guy who is never going to say it's someone else's fault. He's always said with our team, whatever his job description is, that, 'I'm responsible and I'm going to do my job.' When he hasn't done something, he says, 'It's my fault.' I think that transitions into being a good human being."

Mikeala generally lives with her mother, but Thomas regularly takes her whenever he's not in class or at practice or on a road trip. He shares an apartment with Kawhi Leonard, and Mikeala is particularly fond of running into the sophomore forward's room.

Leonard and the rest of the Aztecs are willing uncles, with one exception.

"Nobody wants to change her diaper," Thomas says.

SDSU coach Steve Fisher gave Thomas the day off from practice last season when Mikeala was born. A few days earlier, Thomas had a tattoo added to his right arm, next to the one for his mother. It is a rose with "Mikeala" written beneath it.

When he shoots free throws this season, he mouths her name. He went from shooting 52.7 percent at the line to 66.9 percent.

"It's really calmed me down a lot, being a father," says Thomas, who has been Mountain West Conference player of the week three times and this week was named to the all-conference second team. "Last year I wanted to play hard but I didn't always play hard every play. Now I do. She gives me that extra incentive to work harder. She's my motivation."

The decision to have her accompany him at Senior Night was made months ago, Thomas says. His sister got Mikeala the cheerleader outfit and a matching red hair band. Thomas hoisted her in his right arm and walked to center court while the Viejas Arena announcer introduced his mother, his sister, his daughter to 12,414 fans.

"That's Malcolm," Fisher says. "He's genuine. He's has no pretense. He doesn't try to be somebody who he's not, and he's proud of who he is."

Mikeala patiently stayed through the entire game, and when the students stormed the floor after SDSU's 66-48 victory secured a share of the Mountain West Conference title, Thomas waded through the mass of

humanity toward the baseline. He wanted to share the moment with the women in his life.

"She loves basketball," Thomas says. "Every time she watches me on TV or sees a picture of me, she says, 'Go Daddy.'"

### 120 Aztecs' Leonard hits the glass hard

By Scott Bair | North County Times  
March 9, 2011

Kawhi Leonard was born to rebound.

San Diego State's star forward was given all physical tools necessary to corral loose balls and errant shots others wouldn't dream of pursuing.

His hands are so big he can't find gloves to fit them. He stands 6-foot-7, with a wingspan exceeding 7-2. His agility is gazelle-like and his feet are spring loaded.

**"That's Malcolm,' Fisher says. 'He's genuine. He's has no pretense. He doesn't try to be somebody who he's not, and he's proud of who he is.'"**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs' Thomas draws inspiration from daughter")

**"He has these abilities, but he doesn't take them for granted,' Aztecs assistant coach Brian Dutcher said. 'He hustles for rebounds and works extremely hard at what he does. The combination of instinct, desire and raw talent makes him one of the most talented rebounders I've ever seen.'"**

- Scott Bair (*North County Times* - "Aztecs' Leonard hits the glass hard")

"He has these abilities, but he doesn't take them for granted," Aztecs assistant coach Brian Dutcher said. "He hustles for rebounds and works extremely hard at what he does. The combination of instinct, desire and raw talent makes him one of the most talented rebounders I've ever seen."

Dutcher's opinion is widespread. Opponents -- such as Utah on Thursday in the quarterfinals of the Mountain West Conference tournament in Las Vegas -- scheme against Leonard's abilities, often double teaming him after a missed shot. They sacrifice a player in the name of keeping Leonard at bay.

Such efforts rarely succeed. That's why the sophomore averages 10.8 rebounds a game, has double-figure rebounding totals in two-thirds of his collegiate games and ranks seventh in the nation at crashing the boards for the seventh-ranked Aztecs (29-2).

But, because he's so active in the offense, Leonard is rarely in great position to get rebounds. He's neither a true post presence nor a rebounding specialist, meaning rebounds don't generally fall to him. Leonard must therefore pursue them more than most.

He's still able to get rebounds while being double-teamed by taller players thanks to an innate nose for the ball and where it's headed. Leonard isn't a master of physics, but he can tell, from the shot trajectory and location, exactly how it's going to clang off the glass.

"It's an instinctual thing for me, being able to see where the ball will end up," Leonard said. "It's hard to explain how it happens. It just does. But, once you know where a ball is going to go, it's all about pursuit and desire. I always want

the ball, no matter how far away from it I am."

That's what makes him a real asset to the Aztecs. While taller players like Billy White, Malcolm Thomas and Brian Carlwell can clean glass under the basket, Leonard is their rover. He can snatch a ball from anywhere, and truly believes that, as long as he can touch the palm, his huge hands can secure it.

"Rebounding is about desire," Dutcher said. "The biggest guy doesn't always get the most rebounds. It's usually the guy who wants it the most. When there are 10 guys on the court, that guy is always Kawhi.

"He has a nose for the ball and doesn't give up on anything. There are guys that can rebound in their area and guys who can rebound outside of it. He can go get the ball, even if it's heading away from him. What he does is extremely impressive."

It's attracted NBA scouts aplenty this season, who are curious to see how a tremendously talented player has developed during two seasons in college. Many believe that his all-around game -- from scoring to ball-handling to defense to rebounding prowess -- is good enough to be an NBA lottery pick should the sophomore go pro following this season.

San Diego State students pleaded him to stay Saturday in what might have been his final game at Viejas Arena, chanting, "One more year, one more year," every time his name was announced.

Leonard is focused solely on winning postseason games, not what nationally-televvised double-doubles and rebounding exhibitions will do for his draft stock.

"I'm not focused on that right now," Leonard said. "I'm trying to win out this season and finish on a high note."

Once the Aztecs' run ends, Leonard will mull his options.

"We will talk about it in earnest the second our season ends," head coach Steve Fisher said. "He's done a good job compartmentalizing things. We've had some fireside chats about his future, but nothing terribly detailed. I think he's done a really good job of not allowing any of that to do something out of the ordinary (to impress scouts). He plays to win, which is exactly what we want him to do."

Leonard remains grounded enough to know that a bright future is contingent upon laborious detail work, to make the rest of his game as natural as his rebounding ability.

"Kawhi knows that he's an elite player, but he understands that work is required if he wants to become as good as he and we think he can be," Dutcher said. "He knows that, and he works on little details that make his overall game better. He's a sponge, and he's absorbing and improving upon something every day."

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### Tapley easy to forget until his moments to remember

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 10, 2011

Chase Tapley is the silencer on the Aztecs' revolver, the quiet assassin among a gang of more celebrated hotshots. He's the guy who often doesn't do what he's told because he often doesn't have to be told. He can be a terrible bother.

If this were the Great Depression instead of the Little One, he'd be one of FDR's Forgotten Men. San Diego State's sophomore guard just knows how to play basketball. And if he must trudge on through the thicket of virtual anonymity as the unknown sergeant among the officers on the nation's seventh-ranked college team, that's all right with him.

"I think I handle it well," says Tapley, preparing for his 29-2 team's Mountain West Conference Tournament opener tonight vs. Utah in Las Vegas. "It's all about the team; it's not about me. The guys who get all the credit deserve it. Just contributing to this team and this program is great."

Tapley became a starter last year midway through his true freshman season and has spent the majority of his time as one of those college basketball makeup artists, helping his teammates look better. Every so often, there is a breakout

when he pops his head out of the trench, as he did Jan. 29 at Wyoming, when he scored a career-high 24 points.

In a way, the 6-2 Tapley's a lot like point guard D.J. Gay. He doesn't screw things up. We all know Gay doesn't turn the ball over, but Tapley has played 61 college games and committed just 72 turnovers in 1,461 minutes. It's hard to imagine another college team with two guards who protect the ball as though it were kin.

There are reasons why Tapley starts and plays so much. He's a smart, terrific defender. He works to set up his teammates. He can drive to the basket. And he can pop the occasional three.

"I try to be good at everything," he says. "My main focus is playing defense, making plays defensively that spark runs. The key for us is runs. I try to make a key play on defense and knock down a shot when it has to be knocked down."

This team has been carefully constructed by coach Steve Fisher. There is a place for each part, and if a problem develops, he has a part to replace that part. But Tapley defends and, first and second, Fisher is a defensive coach, always has been, always will be. If you were around then, you know even his storied teams at Michigan played defense first.

"Right now you could compare Chase to a baseball utility player," Fisher says. "He does a little bit of everything and doesn't try to do too much. He can put the ball on the floor and drive to the basket. He's our best finisher. And he will take the ball from you. He's a good defender and a smart defender who can see ahead.

"Chase is just a real good player. A year from now the shackles will come off and people are going to say, 'Where did this kid come from?'"

Tapley was a star at Sacramento High, and when it came down to choose a university, he picked SDSU over USD. For a simple reason, really. He felt the loyalty of Fisher and his staff all along.

"After I broke my leg midway through my sophomore year in high school I wasn't recruited heavily," Tapley says. "San Diego State stayed with me. They were the only school that visited me in the hospital. They actually recruited me from my freshman year. They were loyal to me, so I was loyal to them. Best decision I ever made."

The Aztecs won the MWC Tournament last year and advanced to the NAAs, but they did so without a whole Tapley. He broke his left hand in the team's penultimate regular season game vs. Wyoming, missed the finale vs. Air Force and came back to play in both tournaments. If you watched him, it was easy to tell. He was playing in pain.

"It was a major break in my left hand," Tapley says. "If I had broken my right hand, no way I could have played. As it was, they didn't think I was going to play. But I said I'm not missing any of these games. I manned-up, I guess. I played my heart out those last four games."

Any wonder why Fisher loves this kid? Any wonder why this team is 29-2? Tapley is like his teammates. He isn't worried about rankings or seedings. Keep winning and those things take care of themselves.

"When I first came here, I was shocked when I started, but I never thought I'd see anything like 29-2," he says. "But, after our first practice this year, I said this team is amazing, that we were going to be something special.

"Now we're going to the tournament and you feel like a superstar. If they call me the unknown soldier, that's fine. I'll take it. I want to cut some more nets down. I love big games. Whatever I can do to help."

Let's cut to the Chase. If that means playing muffler on a broken-in muscle car, so be it.

**"Chase Tapley is the silencer on the Aztecs' revolver, the quiet assassin among a gang of more celebrated hotshots. He's the guy who often doesn't do what he's told because he often doesn't have to be told. He can be a terrible bother."**

- Nick Canepa (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Tapley easy to forget until his moments to remember")

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**Gay is the glue guy for Aztecs**By Jay Paris | North County Times  
March 10, 2011

Stretching at practice was a preventive move for San Diego State's D.J. Gay, so as not to pull anything before Thursday night's Mountain West Conference tournament quarterfinal against Utah.

Then Gay was pulled aside by coach Steve Fisher.

"He told me, and I didn't believe him," said Gay, of being informed that he had been named to the All-MWC first team. "I said, 'Are you serious?'"

The folksy Fisher is a lot of things; a practical joker he isn't. So waiting for Fisher's punch line could take a while. Just maybe as long as Gay toiled in the process of becoming one of the conference's elite.

"It just feels like all this hard work, all those hours, is finally starting to pay off," said Gay, a senior. "But a lot of the credit has to go to my team. They make me look much better when I'm out there on the court. I wouldn't get this without them."

How far the No. 7 Aztecs advance this week in Las Vegas, and more importantly in next week's NCAA tournament, is tied to this 6-foot, 170-pound collection of energy, smarts and savvy.

"He's our captain, our leader," forward Malcolm Thomas said.

The rub with Gay is that he's down the pecking order when outsiders eyeball the Aztecs (29-2). Most pupils focus on NBA prospect Kawhi Leonard. Or Billy White's tenacious inside play. Or Thomas' defense. Even the big guy, Brian Carlwell, gets noticed with his inspired play and imposing frame.

Gay? Oh yeah, that guy.

"I've said it repeatedly from day one that he is our most important player," Fisher said.

And possibly the most unlikely.

"He is really laid-back," Thomas said. "He's funny, but he is so laid-back and calm that you wouldn't know it."

Thomas -- as others wearing red and black confirm -- realizes that this magical season would go down like a bad card trick without Gay. While it's fun seeing Leonard and Co. soar above the rim, without the heady guard play below it, this act wouldn't shine.

"When your team tends to try and do too much, the point guard has to be the guy to get everybody in their spot and keep a level head, and that is what D.J. does," Thomas said. "He's never out of control."

Seldom out of the game, too, as he's averaging nearly 37 minutes in conference play.

"His body is beat up and he still maintains that level head and his maturity shows on the court," Thomas said.

But there were doubts that Gay's excellence would be rewarded. While his assist-to-turnover ratio of 3.87 led the MWC, his other numbers weren't as gaudy: He ranked fourth in steals (1.5 per game), fourth in 3-pointers made (2.0), seventh in assists (3.6), 10th in 3-point percentage (.333) and 16th in scoring (11.6).

But Gay's overall excellence -- at one point, he went 177 consecutive minutes without a turnover -- eclipsed individual statistics.

"It tells me we got better, more astute people voting when they can look at value added for a guy like D.J. Gay," said Fisher, the MWC co-coach of the year. "But his 30 points in the New Mexico game, the game-winning field goals, the no turnovers in 7 1/2 games, well, I think that warrants an all-conference selection."

Gay grinned and agreed.

"It shows that they all know what basketball is all about," he said. "It's not always about the numbers -- the points you score or the rebounds. You can contribute to the game in a variety of ways. I'm thankful that they took notice to that and recognized my abilities."

Yet when Fisher tugged Gay's arm to deliver the good news, Gay wasn't sure.

**"When your team tends to try and do too much, the point guard has to be the guy to get everybody in their spot and keep a level head, and that is what D.J. does," Thomas said. "He's never out of control."**

- Jay Paris (North County Times - "Gay is the glue guy for Aztecs")

"He might have been a little bit surprised, to be honest with you," Fisher said. "But he earned that honor without question."

Gay can prove it on Thursday night by slowing Utah's Josh Watkins. It was Watkins who burned the Aztecs for a game-high 24 points in the Utes' 71-62 loss to visiting SDSU earlier this season.

"That's a point guard that we have had as much trouble as with as anybody in the league," Fisher said. "Watkins has given us fits in both games."

It's a challenge that fits Gay to a "T." Or is it Little Mr. T, in knowing the sturdy Gay.

"If he was just walking across campus, people would probably think he is a miniature bodybuilder," Thomas said. "When he takes his jersey off, he has all these big muscles and all this power even though he is so small. He's kind of like a little Mr. T."

As the big Mr. T would say, "I pity the fool who doesn't get it." We do -- Gay is the glue holding the Aztecs together

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**Aztecs open MWC Tournament with win over Utah**By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 11, 2011

During a timeout in the second half of San Diego State's quarterfinal against Utah in the Mountain West Conference tournament, the mascots from both schools engaged in a one-armed push-up contest at center court.

SDSU's Aztec Warrior knocked out one push-up after another while Swoop, Utah's red-tailed hawk, kept up. Monte cranked out a few more. Swoop matched him. Monte dug deep. Swoop dug deeper.

Then the timeout ended.

It was the only real drama of the evening.

The Aztecs won the main event with relative aplomb, leading by as many as 23 en route to a 64-50 decision that was everything that you hope an opening-round game in your conference tournament will be. They broke a sweat, but not a cold sweat.

The good news: SDSU is now 30-2, and of the 15 teams since 2002 that entered the NCAA tournament with 30 wins, none has received lower than a No. 2 seed (and all but two of them got No. 1s).

The bad news: Many experts still have SDSU as a No. 3 and say it must reach the Mountain West final to have any shot at a No. 2, and that now means beating UNLV in today's 8:30 p.m. semifinal on the Rebels' home floor.

But on a day when BYU struggled against TCU and New Mexico went down to the wire against Colorado State, the Aztecs look and sound like a team intent on winning the MWC tournament -- no matter the consequences of three games in as many days.

"We're not worried about the NCAA tournament right now," said forward Malcolm Thomas, who was two assists shy of the first triple-double in school history (13 points, 10 rebounds, eight assists). "We're worried about the Mountain West tournament. We're just trying to win this."

Added Coach Steve Fisher: "We're playing to win three games here in this tournament. Obviously we want to do well in the NCAA tournament. But we want to win here. We want to win two more games here. It's important to us. If it means playing D.J. Gay 40 minutes (against UNLV), so be it. You know, they're anywhere from 19 to 22. I think they'll be resilient enough."

Of the starters, the only one who didn't play above his season average of minutes was Kawhi Leonard. He tweaked his lower back – he called it “just a little cramp” – early in the second half, returned for a spell (and had an emphatic dunk) and then sat out the final eight minutes for what Fisher said was “more precaution on my part.”

Leonard, who finished with 13 points and 12 rebounds in 25 minutes, insisted: “I'm fine.”

With Leonard on the bench, Utah trimmed a 22-point deficit to 12 but never into any sort of danger zone. Utah had 20 turnovers, was outscored 13-2 on fast-break points and shot 39.6 percent – the 20th time the Aztecs held their opponent under 40 percent this season, a staggering number.

“Our defense,” Fisher said, “dictated everything that happened.”

Utah coach Jim Boylen, seeing the box scores of some recent SDSU games (2-of-18 on threes against Colorado State on Saturday), spent the week refining a 2-3 zone that he admittedly loathes to play.

“The last time we played these guys, we gave up too many layups, too many plays at the rim,” Boylen said. “We felt if we played the zone, they would have to play over us a little bit and we'd take our chances with them shooting the ball.”

And in that regard, it had some success. The starting backcourt of Gay and Chase Tapley was a combined 2-of-10 behind the arc.

What Boylen didn't count on was freshman Jamaal Franklin, who arrived at SDSU with a frightful shot and entered Thursday having made just 3-of-13 threes on the season. Against Boylen's zone, Franklin drained three threes in the space of 3:13 in the second half.

“Jamaal has made significant improvement,” Fisher said. “If you watched him in September, he's totally re-vamped his shot. He's a very, very good athlete. He's always been a very, very good athlete. Now he's slowly turning into a very good basketball player ... He's a keeper.”

Another problem for the Utes: SDSU's ability to pass. The Aztecs finished with 18 assists on just 24 baskets. Thomas' eight were a career high. Tapley's five were a season high.

“What happened tonight exemplifies the fact that we are a team,” Fisher said. “We moved the ball with a tremendous amount of poise and thoughtfulness. It never stuck in anybody's hands.”

The teams shook hands afterward and headed in opposite directions. The Utes (13-18) are off to the Pac 12, although it remains to be seen if Boylen will go with them as head coach. The Aztecs head to the semifinals against a hungry UNLV team that shot a combined 2-of-33 behind the arc in their two regular-season meetings and still lost by only six points each time.

In their 69-53 quarterfinal win against Air Force, the Rebels made 11-of-20 threes. Chace Stanback was 6-of-8 himself.

“We know that's going to be hard,” senior forward Billy White, who attended high school not far from the Thomas & Mack Center. “They're going to have a whole bunch of people here. They're always hard to play.

“But we beat them twice. We can beat them again. We've just got to stick to the game plan.”

Here, that's to win. Period.

#### Notes

The Aztecs have had more assists four times this season (19 in three games and 20 once), but in those instances they had no fewer than 32 baskets ... Two less impressive stats: 9-of-16 from the line (56.3 percent) and 11 second-half turnovers (or the season average for an entire game) ... This is the second time in Fisher's career he has won 30 games. His 1992-93 Michigan team went 31-5 and advanced to the NCAA championship game ...

SDSU has won five straight games at the Thomas & Mack Center and seven straight in Las Vegas (counting two December wins at the South Point Arena) ... It is the fourth year in a row they have reached the MWC tournament semifinals ... It was the fifth straight win against Utah, the longest streak in a series dating to 1975.

#### 124

#### D.J. does it again

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 12, 2011

San Diego State beat UNLV 74-72 in the semifinals of the Mountain West Conference tournament on a tear-drop jumper in the lane with 4.9 seconds left by D.J. Gay.

Did you expect anyone else to take it?

Did you expect anyone else to make it?

After breaking up UNLV's lob play with the score tied, the Aztecs got the ball to Gay and got out of the way. The shot was slightly different, but the scenario was eerily similar to the Feb. 2 game at Colorado State, when the Rams tied it late and Gay dribbled the length of the floor without passing to score the dramatic winner.

SDSU coach Steve Fisher didn't call timeout then. He didn't call a timeout Friday night.

“You could tell when D.J. made that first basket – at least I could – that he was going to be playing with confidence and hopefully his shot would fall, and it did tonight,” Fisher said. ‘D.J. is a tremendous competitor ... D.J. is a winner. You want a guy like that on your side.’”

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - “D.J. does it again”)

“Coach Fisher made it clear that he wasn't going to use a timeout,” Gay said. “He told me to get the ball, call for a ball screen and make something happen. They had been playing ball screens pretty hard all night. I knew if I faked right and went left they would bite on it most likely.”

Hook, line and sinker. Gay squirted into the lane and lofted an 8-foot floater over two defenders.

Swish.

Game over.

It gave the Mountain West Conference – and SDSU – its dream final, with the seventh-ranked Aztecs facing eighth-ranked BYU at 4 p.m. Saturday. The Aztecs are 0-2 against the Cougars this season, and 31-0 against everyone else.

“I don't know about the rest of the team,” Gay said, “but that was my No. 1 motivation. Losing to the same team twice, it hurts. We don't follow all the politics (about NCAA tournament seeding). We take things personal, and the two losses in the loss column are something we definitely look at.”

The victory preserved several impressive streaks that were in serious jeopardy of expiring. It was the 43rd straight win for the Aztecs after leading inside five minutes to go; the 40th straight against unranked opposition; the eighth straight in the city of Las Vegas; and the fifth straight against the rival Rebels.

“We made just enough plays,” Fisher said.

The game will be remembered, no doubt, for Gay's heroics, for his soft shot gently arcing over the outstretched arms of UNLV defenders and nestling softly into the net, but it was what happened on the previous play that was every bit as important and showed why Fisher is a candidate for national coach of the year.

With the score knotted at 70, UNLV coach Lon Kruger called timeout with 35.9 seconds left and drew up the same lob play they had run out of a timeout early in the second half. Tre'Von Willis sets a back screen for Chace Stanback on the right side, and Oscar Bellfield throws a lob diagonally over the defense to Stanback while Willis pops to the perimeter.

The first time, SDSU guard Chase Tapley dutifully followed Willis and didn't help on the lob, which Stanback tipped in for an easy basket.

But in the final timeout, Fisher and his staff sniffed it out – repeatedly telling their players to watch for the lob play again. Willis set the screen, Stanback

made the cut, Bellfield threw the lob ... and Tapley was there waiting for it.

Gay: "Coach Fisher called it. He knew it was coming."

Tapley: "Coach Hut (assistant Justin Hutson) said, 'Read his eyes.' I faked like I was going to go with Tre'Von, then I dropped back and tipped it."

Kruger: "Oscar made the right decision. Just didn't get it quite high enough. Game of inches."

The ball caromed off the backboard, off a few players' hands and back to Tapley. Then he gave the ball to the guy who was supposed to be in a shooting slump.

Gay in the previous five games: 13-of-53 overall (24.5 percent) and 7-of-35 on threes (20 percent).

Gay on Friday night: 15 points on 6-of-11 shooting and 3-of-4 on threes.

"You could tell when D.J. made that first basket – at least I could – that he was going to be playing with confidence and hopefully his shot would fall, and it did tonight," Fisher said. "D.J. is a tremendous competitor ... D.J. is a winner. You want a guy like that on your side."

Particularly after blowing a 12-point lead early in the second half and trailing by two inside the final minute.

Attribute that to several factors: improved perimeter shooting by UNLV (5-of-15 on threes as opposed to 2-of-33 in the first two games); 17-of-18 from the line by the Rebels; 22 points by Stanback, including 14 straight late in the first half; SDSU missing eight of nine shots and having three turnovers to open the second half; and several iffy calls down the stretch, including a goaltending whistle on Billy White that replays indicated was a clean block.

But Thomas made a pair of free throws with 43.1 seconds left to tie at 72 and set up the final, dramatic moments.

"I missed a few earlier," said Thomas, who had bricked two straight in the final five minutes. "I was kind of thinking about it. But when I think about missing, I usually miss. So I just went to my usual routine."

"I thought about my family, and they dropped."

#### Notes

Despite playing on UNLV's home floor, the crowd was not as lopsided as you might think. In fact, the team with the best support in the two semifinals probably was BYU, which filled most of the Thomas & Mack Center's lower bowl with blue and white for its 87-76 win against New Mexico. SDSU did have one upper section filled with students, who did the "I believe that we will win" several times. They also chanted, "Choker, choker" and "No means no" at Willis, who was arrested for allegedly choking his girlfriend last year ...

UNLV entered the game having won six straight ... It was the third year in a row the Aztecs have played UNLV in the MWC tournament and the third year in a row they have reached the final... The semis were sold out for the second consecutive year, and today's final is sold out a day in advance for the first time in the conference's 12-year history. The game will be televised live on Versus.

#### 125

### Aztecs beat BYU to win MWC Tournament

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 13, 2011

San Diego State didn't cut down the nets Saturday after slaying BYU and Jimmer Fredette in the championship game of the Mountain West Conference tournament to avenge its only losses of the season.

The Aztecs cut down the net. Singular.

As soon as Coach Steve Fisher had snipped down the final strands of the nylon and twirled it over his head, the hundreds of jubilant fans who had stormed the floor following the emphatic 72-54 victory went in one direction and the Aztecs players went in another. The fans rushed to the other basket. The Aztecs went to the locker room, showered and boarded a bus for San Diego.

"We're going to have more nets to cut down this season," center Brian Carlwell explained. "We don't need to cut them all down now."

The Aztecs looked very much like a team on a mission Saturday afternoon, both from the way they dismantled an eighth-ranked BYU team that had throttled them twice this season and from the sparkle in their eyes when talking about the immediate future.

Billy White – the kid who grew up a short drive from the Thomas & Mack Center – demanded the ball as the final seconds elapsed, just so he could start the celebration by chucking it skyward at the buzzer (high enough that it hit the bottom of the scoreboard) and then jump on the scorer's table.

"I'm hungry, baby," White said. "I'm hungry."

The Aztecs – with a 32-2 record, a No. 7 ranking in the Associated Press poll, No. 3 in the computerized RPI behind Kansas and Ohio State – will learn their NCAA tournament fate today when the brackets are unveiled at 3 p.m. Viejas Arena will host a public viewing party of the selection show with the team.

"We really don't care what seed we get," senior Malcolm Thomas said. "We just want to play hard and get to what we all dream about, and that's a Final Four."

Added BYU coach Dave Rose: "Not many teams are going into the tournament with just two losses. Someone is going to have to put together quite a game to beat 'em."

BYU (30-4) certainly couldn't. SDSU's largest lead in the previous two games had been four points. On Saturday, the Aztecs were already up six after four minutes; by late in the first half, the lead was 14; by the middle of the second half, it was 23.

**"Added BYU coach Dave Rose: 'Not many teams are going into the tournament with just two losses. Someone is going to have to put together quite a game to beat 'em.'"**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* -  
"Aztecs beat BYU to win MWC Tournament")

Fredette finished with 30 points, which is 1.5 above his season average and 22 below what he dropped on New Mexico in the semifinals. He shot 10-of-25 (2-of-7 on threes) and had four turnovers.

But the more impressive stat might have been this: 24.

That's how many points his cohorts scored. When they played at Viejas Arena last month, they combined for 55.

Including Fredette, BYU scored 54 Saturday. That's the season low by a full 10 points and only the third time the Cougars have been held under 70.

Tactically, the Aztecs put length on Fredette – first the 6-foot-8 White, then 6-7 Kawhi Leonard, then rangy 6-5 freshman Jamaal Franklin – and kept them fresh, rotating them every few minutes. They also switched most ball screens, the lifeblood of BYU's offense, and when they didn't they merely "corralled" Fredette instead of the all-out double team they tried in the game at Viejas Arena.

"But our mentality was the big thing," said Justin Hutson, the SDSU assistant coach in charge of defense. "Jimmer is going to make tough shots and he made some tonight. We just had to make sure we didn't get discouraged. We had to stay resilient."

"He can take your heart out sometimes with some of the shots he makes, and we didn't let it. We kept coming."

White had the bulk of the defensive responsibility and responded with arguably the most complete game in his four years on Montezuma Mesa. He finished with 21 points, 12 rebounds, two assists and five steals. It was his first double-double of the season, and just the third of his career.

BYU shot 32.2 percent and, without suspended center Brandon Davies (he sat on the bench in street clothes), was outscored 40-16 on points in paint. SDSU's starting front line combined for 50 points; BYU's had 11.

The Cougars went from making 14-of-24 threes (58.3 percent) in the last game to 6-of-24 (25 percent) on Saturday. Forwards Noah Hartsock and Charles Abou were a combined 7-of-9 in the game at Viejas, and 1-of-8 on Saturday.

"They played with a lot of passion, a lot of emotion," Rose said of the Aztecs. "They caused us a lot of problems."



Fredette ignited one final, and ultimately futile, comeback in the closing minutes. A 15-2 run cut SDSU's lead to 10 points with 5:01 to go, and the Cougars got the ball back with a chance to trim the margin to single digits.

But backup center James Anderson missed a short bank shot. Then Leonard continued a common theme and tipped in a teammate's miss. Then White scored on a three-point play. Then Chase Tapley banked in a layup. Then Leonard, yes, banked in a three-pointer as the shot clock expired over MWC defensive player of the year Jackson Emery.

The lead was back to 20. As the final seconds ticked off, Leonard and Fredette had what appeared to be a heated exchange.

"I'm not going to repeat anything that he said," Fredette said in the post-game news conference, "but he was excited that they won (and he) decided to say some things. I'm not going to back down. I said a couple things as well, then we were done."

Fredette and the Cougars went to the locker room. Leonard and the Aztecs stayed to cut down the net. Singular, not plural.

"There's more winning to be done, and I think everybody on this team feels that way," Carlwell said. "Back in the first practices of the season, the coaches told us that we had something special. The thing is, they didn't really have to convince us.

"We believed it already."

#### Notes

Unless they meet in the NCAA tournament, this was probably the last SDSU-BYU game for a while. BYU is leaving the MWC for the West Coast Conference, and there currently are no plans to schedule the Cougars in the nonconference season. The win ended a four-game losing streak against the Cougars and improved SDSU's record to 3-1 against them on neutral courts ... AM 600 will replay the radio call of the BYU game Sunday at 4 p.m. And AM 1360 and AM 600 will broadcast live at Viejas Arena for the selection show viewing party from 2-4 p.m. with Chris Ello and Ben Higgins ...

Fredette was named tournament MVP. Leonard, White and D.J. Gay joined him on the all-tournament team, along with UNLV's Tre'Von Willis ... It was the second time SDSU has completed the regular season and tournament double, also winning both in 2006 ... SDSU also won the MWC tournament last year. The only other school to do it in back-to-back seasons is UNLV ... No. 8 BYU represents is not the highest ranked team SDSU has ever defeated. It has defeated the No. 7 team in the AP poll three different times ... SDSU had no turnovers for the game's first 15 minutes and finished with six. It had fewer miscues only twice this season, four against both USD and Utah ... It was the fourth time the top two seeds have met in the MWC tournament final. The second seed is now 4-0.

126

### Aztecs get No. 2 seed in West Region

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 14, 2011

Early in the NCAA Tournament Selection Show, CBS put up a graphic of the nation's elite teams and listed "SD St.," an abbreviation more commonly associated with South Dakota State (which has been Division I for less than a decade) and one that drives identity-conscious SDSU officials absolutely bonkers.

And when the Aztecs' four-team corner of the bracket was unveiled, CBS cut to live shots of the other three teams celebrating and not to the viewing party at Viejas Arena with an estimated 2,500 fans.

But Aztecs faithful were in a forgiving mood. The most important entity on Sunday afternoon — the only important entity, really — didn't diss them: the NCAA Tournament selection committee.

Coaches will tell you that there is no such thing as an easy draw in the NCAA Tournament, and we're talking about a school that has yet to win a game in it. But if there is such a thing as a less daunting, less formidable path through the bracket, the 32-2 Aztecs got it. Or as SDSU coach Steve Fisher put it: "We have a wonderful opportunity."

To wit:

**"It's no longer about winning a single game in the NCAA Tournament. It's about not losing one now."**

— Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Aztecs get No. 2 seed in West Region")

•They got a No. 2 seed, which hasn't lost an opening-round game in a decade, and avoided the ignominy of becoming the first 30-win team that wasn't seeded first or second.

•They get to stay in the Pacific time zone for the first two weekends and should play in front of partisan crowds, with games within driving distance for their increasingly fervent fan base: in Tucson, Ariz., on Thursday and Saturday, then Anaheim for the West Regional.

•They are in arguably the weakest of the four regions, with what the selection committee rated the lowest of the No. 1 seeds (Duke); a No. 3 seed that finished tied for ninth in the Big East (UConn); a No. 4 seed that went 4-4 in its last eight games (Texas); and several other teams that have faded or underachieved.

•If form holds, they won't have to play a team from a "power" conference in the second round, instead getting seventh-seeded Temple from the Atlantic 10.

•And in 15th-seeded Northern Colorado, they get a first-round opponent that has never been to the Big Dance and that they also don't have to worry about taking lightly.

They don't, because for motivational fuel they need only think back three years, to Jan. 9 at what was then called Cox Arena.

Northern Colorado 62, SDSU 56.

Tad Boyle, Northern Colorado's coach at the time, called it "the biggest win since we moved to Division I (in 2006)."

Fisher called it "tremendously disappointing." (The Aztecs were outrebounded 36-20 and shot 32.1 percent in the second half).

D.J. Gay? He never forgot it.

"They booed us out of our own arena," said Gay, a freshman starter alongside Billy White. "I remember that like it was yesterday. We played like crap. They played great. They were a team that all of San Diego thought we should beat up on, and they just smacked us.

"I was embarrassed to be booed on our home floor like that. It was not a good feeling."

That might be bad news for the Bears, considering how this Aztecs team has responded to losses, particularly in their "house." BYU beat them at Viejas Arena last month, and the Aztecs' payback was a 72-54 thumping Saturday in the Mountain West Conference Tournament final. Afterward, the players spoke passionately not about wanting so much to win the MWC tournament than just wanting another shot at the Cougars.

Northern Colorado's leading scorer that night was freshman guard Devon Beitzel, who came off the bench for 15 points and four steals in just 20 minutes. Gay and White combined for four points on 2-of-9 shooting in 54 minutes.

All three are now seniors. Beitzel averages 21.4 points for the Bears and was the Big Sky player of the year. Gay and White have led the Aztecs to a 32-2 record and now a No. 2 seed.

"I think we (seniors) will be able to help our teammates who might not know about Northern Colorado," Gay said. "We'll just tell them that they beat a pretty good San Diego State team, and beat us at home."

But pressure can be a fickle master, and the Aztecs find themselves facing a different type of it. Their previous highest seed was No. 11, last year when they lost to No. 6 Tennessee in the first round.

"This year, we're expected to win that first game," Fisher said.

And, if the seeding holds, their second game. And the third game.

And, if you monitor web chatter among fans, the fourth, fifth and sixth, too.

It's no longer about winning a single game in the NCAA Tournament. It's about not losing one now.

Gay, the sage senior, came to that realization Saturday evening, amid the pande-

monium of winning a second straight MWC tournament championship and convincingly avenging their only losses of the season.

"Tim (Shelton) pulled me aside when we were cutting down the net and asked me, 'What's up? You don't look too excited.' I told him, 'I just want to get that first game (in the NCAA tournament). I'm already thinking about it. I'm already worried about it.'

"We just have to keep reminding people that it's too early to talk about the Final Four. We've just got to get that first one."

## 127

### As in real estate, location really matters for Aztecs

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 14, 2011

It's certain the most impassioned performers in The Show will claim that, if SDSU went to court last week and changed its name to DUKE, the Aztecs would be a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament. And they would have a great point. A case can be made.

But you're not going to hear many gripes from the Aztecs after the selection committee awarded the men a No. 2 seed in the West Regional. They play 15th-seeded Northern Colorado on Thursday in Tucson, not Providence, not Chicago.

And, if they can win two games in that subregional, they then can bivouac in Anaheim for the West finals. Bracketitis is damned. To them, especially San Diego State's coaches, it's a game of real estate.

Location, location, location.

For those of you who don't get around much, let me brief you. Travel, in 2011, is hard, as it was in 2010.

"I would have taken a lower seed than the 2 to stay close to home," Aztecs assistant head coach Brian Dutcher was saying following the televised announcement in front a Selection Sunday crowd of about 2,500 in Viejas Arena. "Being close to home is so important. If we were the No. 1 seed out East, I probably wouldn't be happy."

Head coach Steve Fisher, who won a national championship and reached three Final Fours while at Michigan, couldn't agree more. He'd gladly give up a No. 1 to stay close.

"Absolutely," he said. "Brian's point's well taken, for all the things we've talked about. We're playing in our area; we don't have to travel across country. It's relatively simple; we'll jump on a plane and be there in an hour or so. It's a big bonus for us. This provides us with the best opportunity to win."

The difference between 1 and 2 is a prestige halo more than anything. Ohio State, Kansas and Pitt were the first three seeds — hard to argue that — and Duke was given the fourth No. 1, in the West, which means if it wins its first two tournament games in nearby Charlotte, N.C., it will have to travel across the country to Anaheim.

SDSU finished 32-2, Duke 30-4. SDSU ranks third in the country in RPI, Duke fourth. SDSU's strength of schedule ranks 22 to Duke's 31. But, you may say, the Blue Devils played in the mighty ACC, the Aztecs in the Mountain West. Except the ACC wasn't good at all this year and the conference's final RPI was fifth. The MWC's was fourth.

The Aztecs did so many things committee members weigh heavily. Besides their high RPI, they went 18-1 in games played outside their arena. They finished strong, winning their last five — including three in the Mountain West Conference Tournament — and 12 of their last 13.

Not that it's their fault, but what the Aztecs didn't have were many "committee-quality" wins. They've defeated but one team that's currently ranked, BYU, thanks to their resounding win in Saturday's MWC finale. Teams they whipped on the road that everyone in November thought might be pretty good — Gonzaga, Wichita State, Saint Mary's and Cal — slipped, although Gonzaga improved near the end, winning its last nine and 11 of its final 12. UNLV's a good team, NCAA bound, and the Aztecs beat the Rebels three times

— twice in Vegas, one coming in the conference semis — and if you think winning at the tables is hard, try winning at the Thomas & Mack.

So, yes, State deserved a No. 1 seed over the Blue Devils, but a magical year doesn't necessarily give birth to a magical name, which is what Duke has. If product placement in this case seems unfair, it is, but it really isn't a slam at State's program. Before this, the Aztecs hadn't been seeded higher than 11th in the NCAAs.

They'll take it, not that they have any choice. But their attitude makes sense. If you've been watching college basketball this past week, you know there are no great teams and those at the top certainly aren't invincible. Ohio State barely escaped Northwestern. Pitt got clubbed by UConn, the ninth seed in the Big East.

"Head coach Steve Fisher, who won a national championship and reached three Final Fours while at Michigan, couldn't agree more. He'd gladly give up a No. 1 to stay close."

- Nick Canepa (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "As in real estate, location really matters for Aztecs")

This is what the Aztecs now have to be concerned with, playing not ranking. They should be focusing on Northern Colorado — a team many SDSU players know well. State won in Greeley in December 2008 and lost to the Bears here in January of that same year.

Seeding, schmeeding. A new year begins Thursday. State has zero (nada, zilch) NCAA Tournament victories on its résumé. As one fan told me before yesterday's seedings: "I hope we're not a 1. A 1 has never lost in the first round. Four 2s have lost."

Being an Aztec, he's aware there's always a concern about being a negative first.

"Everybody loves a winner," Fisher said. "So do I."

The kids have gone inside. The men come out to play now. And if they can play close to home, that's not wimping out.

## 128

### Preparing for Aztecs' opponent requires serious cramming

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 15, 2011

David Velasquez has been with San Diego State men's basketball program in some capacity for nine years, first as a student manager, then as a player, now as the director of player development.

He was seated with the team at Viejas Arena on Sunday afternoon for the NCAA Tournament Selection Show viewing party. He leaped up when the Aztecs were given the No. 2 seed in the West. He pumped his first, high-fived some players, shared a few hugs.

And then he was gone.

As the celebration in Viejas Arena raged on, Velasquez was riding the elevator to the concourse level, exiting the arena, crossing 55th Street and rushing upstairs to the basketball offices in the athletic department. It was 3:20 p.m. His day was just beginning.

His night was just beginning.

His week was just beginning.

"Hopefully, it won't be like last year," Velasquez said. "Last year was terrible. Last year, not kidding, I probably slept 10 hours total from this time on Sunday to the tipoff of Thursday's game."

Velasquez is SDSU's video guy, responsible for finding game tapes of the next opponent on short notice, which in the NCAA Tournament can have a degree of difficulty inversely related to your seed. The better teams get the more obscure opponents in the opening round, and the more obscure teams aren't on TV very often.

Northern Colorado of the Big Sky Conference?

Weren't they on Denver's Altitude channel a couple of times?

Velasquez searched the stack of DVDs stacked on his desk (he had recorded every televised Division I college game since early February), and breathed a sigh of relief. He had three games of the 15th-seeded Bears. Not great, but not horri-

ble.

At least it wasn't Long Island University, the 15th seed in the East Region. That was Velasquez's nightmare. He had one Blackbirds game on DVD.

An hour later, Velasquez had found two more Northern Colorado games on the Internet. By the time the coaches returned from Viejas Arena, they had DVDs waiting for them on their desks.

They walked into their offices, closed the door and started watching.

The game behind the game had begun.

"All the grunt work," SDSU coach Steve Fisher calls it.

After a conference season of playing teams two and sometimes three times, of facing coaches and systems you have been facing for years, the NCAA Tournament tosses you a curve ball. You get four days to prepare for a team you usually know nothing about.

And, really, it's less than that. The Selection Show is Sunday afternoon, and Monday is your only "normal" practice of the week. In SDSU's case, that's 20 hours.

Tuesday's practice has a rushed feel, because most teams are headed to the airport immediately afterward. Wednesday is a public practice at the McKale Center in Tucson that, because it's open to the public, is devoid of tactical work. With a 1:40 p.m. tipoff Thursday, there's no time for the usual morning shoot-around and on-court strategy session.

And being so late in a grueling season, whatever practice time they have is abbreviated in deference to fatigue and mental focus.

Not resting, though, is the coaching staff.

Velasquez's stat line: 15 and four.

That's how many game tapes he had tracked down on Northern Colorado by Monday afternoon, and how many hours of sleep he got Sunday night.

"You get to this time of year and you want absolutely no stone unturned," said UCSD coach Chris Carlson, who knows the drill, having served as an assistant on Ben Howland's staff at Pitt and UCLA. "You're totally on fumes. Starbucks becomes your best friend."

It takes two hours to upload each game DVD into a digitized computer program, then a further 2½ hours by Velasquez to break down each possession into dozens of categories — side ball screens, inbounds plays, post touches, press offense. From there, coaches can edit particular situations into a scouting video to show the players.

When they're not watching film, the coaches are calling contemporaries to glean further information on an opponent. Sometimes they just talk on the phone. Sometimes they send a game tape. Sometimes, they email their actual written scouting report.

"There's always a gag order not to send tape or give scouting reports on other schools in your conference," SDSU assistant head coach Brian Dutcher said.

Then he smiled.

"Put it this way: The coaching fraternity is formed on close relationships."

The Aztecs have several things in their favor, beginning with a senior-laden roster with a veteran understanding of the college game's nuances. The coaches marveled at how well they absorbed subtle adjustments to the defensive game plan against BYU's Jimmer Fredette last Saturday in a single chalk talk, without the benefit of a practice or a morning shoot-around.

The Aztecs also have a staff that, in most cases, has been together for a decade.

"That's worth its weight in gold," Fisher said. "for the familiarity for what we need to do, for the lack of resentment about who gets the credit and who has to

do what ... They know what I want, what I like, what I don't like."

Oh, and they've already started gathering, uploading, inputting and editing game tape for Saturday's second round, which means preparing for two teams, Temple or Penn State. Velasquez is up to 10 Temple games, and 12 for Penn State.

"It's a grind," UCSD's Carlson said. "I remember the night before our second (trip to the) Final Four at UCLA. We finished watching tape at 2:30 a.m. and we thought we were done. We're getting ready to leave and Ben goes, 'Put that Alabama game in again.'

"We were up till 4:30 watching that."

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### Ironman D.J. Gay has been Aztecs' rock

By Tim Sullivan | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 15, 2011

D.J. Gay's body is a temple with a drive-through window.

San Diego State's ascetic point guard shuns soda, avoids cake, eschews chocolate and ignores ice cream. He binges, instead, on burgers.

"'He's a warrior,' said Aztecs forward Malcolm Thomas. 'He'll never give up. He won't show any weakness. Sometimes he has his hands on his hips, but he's not bending over gasping for air. D.J. is going hard all the time.'"

- Tim Sullivan (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Ironman D.J. Gay has been Aztecs' rock")

"In-N-Out Burger — after every game I get two double-doubles," Gay confessed Monday afternoon. "That's my weakness."

No more than 6-feet tall and presently just 165 pounds, D.J. Gay's silhouette is so slight by basketball standards that he makes you wonder, "Where's the beef?" Yet both his diet and his will are rich in iron, and none of the more muscular Aztecs can match his superlative staying power.

Gay is the constant in Steve Fisher's cosmos, the glue, the granite, the guy who directs traffic and discourages substitution. The only Mountain West Conference player who logs more minutes is BYU's Jimmer Fredette, and Fredette barely dabbles in defense. The only way Gay figures to get a break during the NCAA Tournament is if one of his games becomes a blowout.

"I know that he's one guy that will not wear down mentally, for sure, and probably not physically," Fisher said. "... He could go 40 minutes for six games if we're playing six games."

Gay will travel to Tucson for Thursday's first-round game against Northern Colorado averaging 34.8 minutes per game, and his 1,183 total minutes are 122 more than his nearest teammate. Yet even those statistics understate how essential he has become to the 32-2 Aztecs. In the 13 games SDSU has won by 10 points or fewer — none of them overtime games — Gay averaged more than 38 minutes on the floor. He played all 40 minutes seven times during the season.

"He's a warrior," said Aztecs forward Malcolm Thomas. "He'll never give up. He won't show any weakness. Sometimes he has his hands on his hips, but he's not bending over gasping for air. D.J. is going hard all the time."

As a junior, Gay played at least 39 minutes in each of the Aztecs' last seven games. If he spent any less time sitting down, you'd think he had hemorrhoids.

"I never want to come out," he said. "There are times I have to stop myself from thinking the wrong way. If I come out of a game, my first thought is, 'Why am I out of the game? What did I do?' like I did something wrong. Then I look at the stat sheet and I'm still playing 36 minutes.

"I'm like, 'Come on, D.J. You can't complain. Your body needs it.' My mind's saying, 'Go, go, go.' But you've got to listen to your body."

When his body is complaining, Gay said, the source is normally his knees or his lower back. He has been fighting cumulative aches this season with ice baths, and for the last two years has embraced a rigorous lifting program that leads him to the weight room four or five times a week, and typically twice a day.

"I probably do a lot of things that some people would consider unhealthy and you shouldn't do, like working out every morning," Gay said. "I try to destroy my body as much as I can, just to rebuild it, so I know when my body starts to let me

down, I know how to fight through it.

"If I'm getting tired and I'm exhausted and I can manage to push one or two more (repetitions) out (in the weight room), I know when I'm on the court and I feel I'm about to pass out, I know I can go that extra mile."

Gay drew heavily on his reserves during Friday's Mountain West Tournament semifinal victory over UNLV. Recognizing a lack of experienced depth behind Gay, and that the Aztecs were playing their second game in as many nights, Vegas coach Lon Kruger extended his defense to apply more full-court pressure.

"UNLV, they got the best of me in the tournament," Gay said after the Aztecs' Monday practice at Viejas Arena. "They pressed me the whole game. They made sure they were going to wear me down from the time I got the ball. I felt myself wearing down, (but) I told myself, 'You've felt this before. You can push through it.'"

Sure enough, with the score tied in the closing seconds of regulation, D.J. Gay summoned the strength to drive down the lane for a game-winning floater. Though he failed to score in Saturday's championship game against BYU, Gay's clutch and consistent play earned him a place on the all-tournament team.

"D.J. was surprised (by the honor)," Fisher said. "He felt he was good enough, but he didn't know that others would view him that way."

There could be more recognition in store. Reliable guard play is often decisive during the NCAA Tournament, particularly in the later rounds between teams of comparable talent, and D.J. Gay figures to be on the floor for every meaningful Aztec moment.

The Aztecs' fear is that Gay might hit the wall, and begin launching bricks at the basket. Their hope is that the tournament's longer commercial breaks will afford him more opportunities to catch his breath.

Their scouting report should be reassuring: In-N-Out has multiple locations in Tucson.

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#### Franklin's 'gamble' has paid off for SDSU — and himself

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 16, 2011

Two days before the season opener, San Diego State coach Steve Fisher pulled aside freshman Jamaal Franklin after practice and suggested, again, that he red-shirt.

Fisher's roster included five seniors, five returning starters and 10 players who had started college games in their careers. They were going to be good. His rotation would have eight, maybe nine players. There wouldn't be many, if any, minutes for an unproven freshman whose shot needed major reconstruction and who was struggling to grasp the nuances of defense at the college level.

It made perfect sense.

Except to Franklin. He shook his head.

"I told Coach Fisher I wasn't going to redshirt, that I wanted to prove myself," Franklin says. "I told him if I didn't play, it would be my loss. I told him I wanted to stick it out and grind it out. I told him it was my risk."

There's a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

"I'm glad I took that gamble," he says.

So is Fisher. The 6-foot-5 and freakishly athletic Franklin has worked his way into what is currently a nine-man rotation, getting meaningful minutes in five straight games and 11 of the past 13, even being assigned to cover BYU's Jimmer Fredette for stretches in Saturday's final of the Mountain West Conference Tournament.

"He willed his way for an opportunity," says Fisher, who has called Franklin the team's most improved player. "When he went (five) games without playing, he wasn't a guy who let up in practice and sealed his fate. Instead he practiced so hard and so long that I didn't have a choice but to give him minutes, and when he got in there he made the most of it."

And that shot?

"I saw him score a lot of points," Hutson says. "I saw him jump over a guy and dunk on him. The football coach raved about him. The track coach raved about him. But what I really liked was that he's very competitive. Very competitive."

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Franklin's 'gamble' has paid off for SDSU — and himself")

Another risk, another gamble. Instead of waiting until the summer to undergo a major overhaul — straightening his right elbow, removing sidespin applied by his left hand, shooting up instead of slinging it from behind his head — he did it during the season, usually a recipe for disaster because of the loss of confidence that often accompanies it.

Franklin didn't make a three-pointer in a game until Jan. 29, and last week against Utah he was draining three treys in the space of 3:13 in the second half. In three games at the MWC Tournament, he was 4-of-8 behind the arc.

Surprised, but not really, is Aztecs assistant coach Justin Hutson, the staff's recruiting coordinator who unearthed the football, basketball and track star from Serrano High in Phelan, a high desert town between Palmdale and Victorville.

"I saw him score a lot of points," Hutson says. "I saw him jump over a guy and dunk on him. The football coach raved about him. The track coach raved about him. But what I really liked was that he's very competitive. Very competitive."

Franklin was an all-section receiver and safety in football, and he made the state track meet as a 7-foot high jumper. He says his vertical leap, last measured as a high school sophomore, was 40 inches. On his signature dunk, when he tosses the ball off the backboard with his left hand and dunks it with his right, he ducks so his head won't hit the rim.

Franklin initially committed to SDSU during his senior year at Serrano but didn't meet NCAA academic qualifications and spent a year at Westwind Prep in Phoenix improving his grades. That also meant his recruitment could be re-opened, and among the schools that showed interest last year were Utah, Oregon, Baylor and Washington.

Franklin picked the Aztecs again anyway.

"San Diego State had always been there for me," Franklin says. "Those other schools lagged off me when I wasn't able to qualify. They stuck with me."

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#### Four keys to the Final Four for Aztecs

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 16, 2011

San Diego State is 32-2, No. 5 in the final ESPN/USA Today coaches' poll, No. 6 in The Associated Press poll and the No. 2 seed in the West Region of the NCAA Tournament.

Aztecs get first win ever in NCAA Tournament One giant leap for Aztecs with victory over Bears Gay ends scoring drought with three U.S. Secretary wants to punish some NCAA teams Northern Colorado's flight of phoenix lands in Tucson 'A different animal' Time for Aztecs to make different kind of history ...More

Now what?

The first task will be to win the first NCAA Tournament game in the program's history (the Aztecs are 0-6, including a 62-59 loss to Tennessee last year). Then it's to survive the opening weekend and reach the Sweet 16. Then it's to venture deeper into what, for them, is the great unknown of college basketball.

Here are four keys to doing that and spending the first weekend of April in Houston:

#### Shooting stroke

Way back in October, before a single game had been played, captain D.J. Gay was asked how he would play against this Aztecs team.

"I don't know," Gay said. "I guess I'd let us shoot and hope we miss."

The Aztecs are athletic, deep, quick, strong, experienced. They rebound as well as any team in the country. They defend as well as any team in the country. They share the ball. They have multiple offensive weapons. They can play up-tempo. They can grind it out.

But if there is an Achilles' heel, if there is an asterisk, it is perimeter shooting.

It isn't their overall three-point shooting percentage, which at .344 ranks in the middle of the pack nationally. It is that sometimes they are deadly shooting the three, and sometimes they're not. They can go 13-of-25 against New Mexico in The Pit. They can go 0-of-18 against Cal Poly at home.

Eleven times this season, in fact, they shot 25 percent or less behind the arc.

They survived a 3-of-20 clunker against IUPUI in December, a 4-of-22 at TCU, a 2-of-18 in the regular-season finale against NIT-bound Colorado State. But can they survive that in the tournament, where guard play historically decides games?

The optimistic answer: Maybe.

The realistic answer: Probably not.

#### Billy White

He ranks first on the SDSU career lists in field-goal percentage (.604) and games started (121). And in inconsistency. No player on the roster has higher highs and lower lows.

White dropped 30 points at Gonzaga, then followed it with six against Wisconsin-Green Bay (a game SDSU trailed by 22 in the first half). He had 24 points on 10-of-12 shooting against Wichita State, then followed that with games of 10, five and six.

He had back-to-back games of 19 and 15 points against TCU and Utah last month, then had four points at UNLV and this confounding stat line a few days later against New Mexico: zero points, zero shot attempts, two rebounds and two turnovers in 25 minutes.

There also has been the early foul trouble. Sixteen times in the first 27 games against Division I opponents, White had two fouls in the first half — sometimes as early as four or five minutes.

To White's credit, though, he seems to have sorted it out. He's gone five straight games with only one foul in the first half. He's gone four straight games with double-figure scoring. And his performance against BYU last Saturday — 21 points, 12 rebounds, two assists, five steals, plus lockdown defense on Jimmer Fredette — might have been the most complete of his career.

The Aztecs need that Billy White.

"Coach (Steve) Fisher came up to me before the (conference) tournament and said, 'You need to step it up a little bit,'" White said. "If that's what my team wants me to do, then I'll do it."

#### Play from behind

NCAA Tournament games tend to be tight, taut affairs, and there comes a time when all teams find themselves trailing in the closing minutes, needing a stop on defense, needing a basket on offense. And SDSU very well could be calm and poised in those situations.

Could be. There just isn't enough of a sample size from this season to be certain.

Only six of the Aztecs' 34 games were still one-possession contests in the final two minutes. And only four times did they trail inside five minutes to go — twice against BYU, and twice against UNLV in Las Vegas. In the final five minutes of the 32 games they won, they trailed for a grand total of 72 seconds (out of 160 minutes).

The flip side: The Aztecs have won 43 straight when leading with five minutes to go.

"We would like to be ahead," Fisher said, "but there will be tournament games where we won't be and we'll need to make a play late in a game. But I'm not concerned. That shouldn't be a problem for our team. I don't think we'll be rat-

tled."

#### The second game

Barring a catastrophic collapse against 15th-seeded Northern Colorado, SDSU's tournament fortunes basically come down to Saturday in Tucson against Temple or Penn State.

Here's the thinking: Anything short of a Sweet 16 will be considered a failure for a No. 2 seed with a favorable draw that allows it to reach the Final Four without leaving the Pacific time zone. And that puts an inordinate amount of pressure on Saturday.

Reach the Sweet 16, and that pressure magically dissipates. Everything becomes gravy, and they'd be playing at Anaheim's Honda Center in front of partisan crowds.

**"Mark Fisher is the apple of his father's eye, but according to the San Diego State players and other assistants, also a solid coach."**

- Jay Paris (*North County Times* - "Basketball a family business for Fishers")

Back to the second game, though. The tricky part for high seeds is that you often mow down your opening-round opponent, then suddenly plunge into the frigid water against a capable team that just gutted out a tough game and is fully acclimated to the anxious rhythms of the tournament.

Last year, No. 1 Kansas beat Lehigh in the opener and lost to Northern Iowa in the second game. In 2007, No. 1 Ohio State would reach the final but had a scare, going to overtime against Xavier, in the second round.

On the way to the 2006 final, UCLA beat Belmont by 34 in the opener before eking out a three-point win against 10th-seeded Alabama in games played at Viejas Arena. In 2004, No. 1 Stanford and No. 2 Gonzaga both lost second-round games hours apart on the same court (in Seattle) after blowouts two days earlier.

It's why coaches from elite programs privately tell you: The tournament doesn't start until the second round.

SDSU just can't have it end there.

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#### Basketball a family business for Fishers

By Jay Paris | *North County Times*  
March 17, 2011

It's a San Diego State pregame ritual, one done away from prying eyes and TV cameras. Two guys sharing the same name and goal embrace with a hug that only a father and son can appreciate.

Welcome to the minutes before tip-off in the Aztecs men's basketball locker room. Steve and Mark Fisher wrap their arms around each other, making sure to savor this season and their special time together.

I'm a sucker for father-son stories. And among the compelling tales of San Diego State's remarkable 32-2 season is something along the lines of the basketball apple not falling far from the hoop.

Mark Fisher is the apple of his father's eye, but according to the San Diego State players and other assistants, also a solid coach.

It takes a strong bond where a dad can invite the kid into the family business and both thrive.

"I've got my son on the bench, and I know that doesn't happen to many families," Steve said. "To work with your son or daughter every day, you can't beat it. I'm living a dream.

"I tell our players to dream big, and I'm doing that, too."

Mark envisioned playing for his father instead of coaching with him. When Steve was at Michigan, Mark was set to contribute as player -- kind of.

"I was going to be a walk-on, meaning wave a towel and hand out water," Mark said. "That was going to be really fun, but it wasn't in the cards. But boy, things worked out."

When Steve was shown the door at Michigan, Mark's athletic dreams followed

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him through it. Mark got his psychology degree from Michigan, but then felt that coaching itch that needed to be scratched.

So he landed the Lincoln (Ann Arbor) High freshman team job and, man, was he in over his head.

"We struggled," Mark said. "We had awesome kids but didn't win a lot of games. That coach did not know what he was doing, but I think he got a little better; he learned."

But really, it's an education that was absorbed before Mark knew he wanted to go X's and O's. That rings true for the other San Diego State assistants, Brian Dutcher and Justin Hutson, as their fathers were coaches, too.

"It's a great benefit to grow up around the game," Dutcher said. "To sit there as a high school student and watch your dad work, we picked up little nuances that you don't have to be on the job to get."

Mark stayed at Lincoln for four years and then joined his father at Montezuma Mesa nine years ago, filling a variety of roles. This is his fourth year as an assistant coach and 31st as Steve's son.

"They play well off each other," Dutcher said. "Mark knows how to push his dad's buttons; he is not afraid to speak his mind, and Coach (Fisher) knows Mark has a good basketball mind and he's not afraid to say what he has to say.

"Coach (Fisher) doesn't take his advice because he is his son, but because he is a damn good coach."

While Steve leans on defense and rebounding, Mark is intrigued with offensive schemes and scoring. He works with the big men in practice, sharpening the skills around the rim.

"He knows exactly what he is talking about and does a good job," forward Malcolm Thomas said. "He's kind of got a little bit more of a temper than Coach Fisher and he is quick to tell you to listen up and be quiet. But sometimes you need that."

Everyone requires being put in their place, and that goes for Steve, too.

Mark said one person gets his dad to follow orders: Angie, his wife of 36 years.

"He has zero say at home," said Mark, who lives in Carmel Valley, not far from dad's Del Mar digs. "He goes from boss to second-in-command in a heartbeat. My mom calls the shots at home, and I think he is OK with that. He goes from making all the decisions here to being told to wash the dishes and bring the logs in for fire."

But Mark's ears have burned with some wondering if he's a coach through his own merits. Being the son of a noted coach can come with a burden.

"I'm smart enough to know its benefits far outweigh the costs, yet there are some people that have a preconceived notion of me based on the name," Mark said. "But to be his son, to have learned all I have learned from him, to be privy to the things I have seen since my childhood, I wouldn't trade it for the world.

"And this is probably the best part of it, to be on the staff and winning championships and cutting down nets with my father. I don't think it could be any better. This is really cool to share a year like this together."

Sealed, of course, with a hug.

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## 'A different animal'

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 17, 2011

The San Diego State men's basketball team came to Arizona's McKale Center on Wednesday afternoon and participated in the mandatory news conference followed by the mandatory 40-minute practice that is open to the public.

They dunked a few times for the crowd. They each tried a half-court shot (D.J. Gay and LaBradford Franklin made theirs). They posed for a photo at center court. They waved to friends and family in the stands.

Then they rode a bus back to their secluded hotel at the base of the Catalina

Mountains with an elaborate water slide in the pool and a swim-up bar and a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, ate dinner and filed into an empty ballroom.

A free-throw line was drawn on the carpet with white athletic tape.

There, with the lights of Tucson twinkling below, the Aztecs players walked through Northern Colorado's offensive sets, reviewed its defensive tendencies, discussed the details of the game plan for today's NCAA Tournament game. How they are going to defend screens. How they are going to attack the zone. How they are going to exploit double teams in the post.

Never mind that the Aztecs are a No. 2 seed, ranked No. 6 in The Associated Press poll, one of just 12 teams in history to enter the NCAA Tournament with 32 wins and a 15½-point favorite.

This is the Tournament — or as the East Coast players and coaches say, the "Torn-a-ment."

"A different animal," coach Steve Fisher said.

That is the beauty and the beast — and the harsh reality — of the NCAA Tournament, an event that began as an innocent extension of the season and morphed into an entity unto itself, into something infinitely more powerful and more important. Into something capable of erasing an entire regular season, good or bad.

"The way I look at it, it's basically a different season," junior forward Tim Shelton said. "Yeah, we got all these accolades and stuff. Yeah, we got two players on the all-conference first team and three players on the all-tournament team. Yeah, we won the regular-season championship and tournament championship. Yeah, we won 32 games.

"It all means nothing if you lose in the first round."

So you don't take the Northern Colorado Bears of the Big Sky Conference lightly, even if they are a No. 15 seed and making their first appearance at the Big Dance. And you really don't take them lightly if you're SDSU, which has been to the NCAA Tournament six times in school history and lost in the first round six times.

Fran Dunphy knows the feeling. Temple's coach has lost 10 straight first-round games, three with the Owls and seven at Penn. On Wednesday, his players were repeatedly asked about the Tournament losing streak, and not about their 25-7 season that included appearances in the Top 25.

"That's how people grade you nowadays, by how you do in the postseason," center Lavoy Allen said. "So, you know, although we had a good year, we have to put it behind us."

Which is why, before leaving for the McKale Center on Wednesday, Fisher wrote this on the grease board in a team meeting:

Tucson Invitational.

That's how he is approaching the games here, like a four-team tournament in Tucson. Win Thursday and you play in the final Saturday. Win Saturday, and you get to play in another four-team tournament the next weekend in Anaheim. No looking back, no looking forward.

"People remember those teams that get into the NCAA and find a way to win," said Fisher, who on Wednesday was named one of four finalists for the Naismith College Coach of the Year award. "We're no different (now) than Northern Colorado or anyone else playing in it."

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## Time for Aztecs to make different kind of history

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 17, 2011

These Aztecs cannot hope to be caretakers of the legacy, keepers of the flame, masters of their domain. Because there is no legacy. There is no flame. There is no domain. This is San Diego State. Let Down U.

It's up to these SDSU basketball seekers of wisdom and truth to become frontiersmen, to forge new history, explore uncharted ground, machete the undergrowth, exorcise the demons, clear their throats and go where no young Aztec

has dared go before — when there was someplace to go before. As there is now.

In other words, be somebody.

If you're an Aztec, want to be an Aztec, or forever will be an Aztec, you can't forget the past; you only can hope not to relive it. If you're the most optimistic Montezuma Mesan, you must look at today's NCAA Basketball Tournament game here vs. Northern Colorado as Ulysses did the way home to Ithaca. Fraught with peril and one-eyed monsters and Sirens and Scylla and Charybdis.

It's a major part of the San Diego Thing — not the curse, the Thing. They have lived it.

They have seen Andy Trakas miss the winning field goal against USC.

They have seen Brandon Sullivan fumble going into the end zone at Notre Dame.

They have seen the Aztecs blow a Holiday Bowl bid by losing to UNLV, the worst team in America.

They have seen the Aztecs, without a special teams coach, lose a Holiday Bowl after taking a late lead and giving up a long kickoff return and then a game-winning field goal to Iowa.

They have seen Stephen Strasburg, the most famous of collegiate pitchers, lose his first game in the NCAA Baseball Tournament.

They have seen the Aztecs dribble away a late lead vs. Indiana in the first round of the 2006 NAAs.

Let's stop there and catch our breath.

This university can only hang onto Don Coryell's velour shirt for so long. Even then, State played small college ball, but that ship left port 40 years ago. We lost the greatest fishing industry in the world. We're broke.

So, granted, the San Diego Thing hasn't been limited to the Aztecs — or the Chargers and Padres reaching championships only to be squashed by some of the greatest teams of the second half of the 20th Century — or plain sports. But sports is in the lead.

Rum luck. It happens. It's just that it happens to San Diego's sports teams — not individuals, but teams — so often. The law of averages is a cockeyed lout, but even louts have to sleep sometime, no?

This is San Diego State's awake time. Maybe it kind of began with the Poinsettia Bowl victory over Navy, but this is a basketball program that never has won an NCAA Tournament game. And they've been hooping since C.E. Peterson tossed out the first ball in 1921.

There's no denying this SDSU basketball team has more going for it, more reason to advance and not disappoint, than any major sports team since Sid Gillman's Chargers won the 1963 AFL championship.

These Aztecs have the ideal vehicle for the long trip and the stars are aligned.

They're good. They're long and athletic. They rebound. They defend. When they've got it going, they make very few mistakes and crush you. They don't lose games they lead near the end. They're 32-2, and average teams do not go 32-2, 18-1 away from home.

Their coach, Steve Fisher, has won an NCAA championship and reached three Final Fours (at Michigan). He knows the drill, knows the thrill. He knows when to send up the yellow flag.

Seniors. This Aztecs team has five of them in an era when coaches go begging for senior leadership. They've all experienced Tournament defeat, the latest coming in last year's tough first-round loss to Tennessee.

They're on a roll. They swept three games in the Mountain West Conference Tournament. They've won five in a row, 12 of their last 13.

Their NCAA bracket is winnable.

They're healthy. They haven't played since Saturday.

And they're close to home.

Just remember: Northern Colorado beat a pretty good State team in 2008 — at SDSU. Just remember: The Aztecs were down 22 to Wisconsin-Green Bay earlier this year. Just remember: They never have won a game of this magnitude this deep in March.

But Fisher won't black out the past. He wants his kids to remember where they've been, where the school has been. It may provide a clearer map to where they want to go.

"They're well aware of the fact San Diego State has never won a Tournament game, NCAA Division I," Fisher was saying here Wednesday when not fielding Fab Five questions. "I like the fact that we've got a group that played last year in the Tournament. I've never had that (back-to-back) privilege at San Diego State.

"You grow up and if you are a basketball player, this is what you look forward to when you are in grade school watching. You call in sick."

There is the nervous factor.

"The first time you play, I do believe, that you are a little extra nervous," Fisher said. "We were like that last year and it took too long for that to wear off. Hopefully, we'll be better prepared because of all that."

These guys could be the ones.

Get thee behind the Aztecs, San Diego Thing.

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#### Fisher expects to be at SDSU for rest of career

By Scott Bair | North County Times  
March 17, 2011

Steve Fisher has no plans to pull a Brady Hoke.

The allure of major-conference prestige, national attention and the huge paycheck that comes with it can act as a siren, drawing quality coaches away from mid-major schools.

San Diego State should know. It happened to the football program a few months ago when Hoke jumped at his dream job coaching Michigan.

That won't happen to a men's basketball program in the midst of unprecedented success, one poised and ready for an NCAA tournament run starting Thursday against Northern Colorado in Tucson, Ariz.

The No. 6-ranked Aztecs are 32-2. They have been considered among college basketball's elite all season. And they have zero chance of losing their coach.

Fisher, 65, views this university as a final destination, not a steppingstone.

"Most people in my profession, they're worried about keeping their job. That's a fact," Fisher said. "I'm not worried about that. I've got my job. I'll leave when I want to leave."

- Scott Bair (North County Times - "Fisher expects to be at SDSU for rest of career")

"Most people in my profession, they're worried about keeping their job. That's a fact," Fisher said. "I'm not worried about that. I've got my job. I'll leave when I want to leave."

The timetable for Fisher's departure? No time soon.

Fisher has a home in Del Mar. He works on a campus that worships him. He has built a strong program with consistent success and has turned once-vacant Viejas Arena into a rabid place to play.

He has had success on the big stage, taking Michigan to three Final Fours and a national title. He has also dealt with the scrutiny that comes with it.

San Diego State has become Fisher's oasis, and he has no intention of walking away from a good thing.

"We've sat down (and) had that conversation," San Diego State athletic director Jim Sterk said. "I've asked what he ultimately wants to do, and his answer was

simple. He said, 'I don't want to go anywhere.' We want to make sure that sentiment continues.

"He's had a great run so far and wants to continue that. Steve has a great basketball mind, but he always thinks about the big picture and how to rally a community as well as his own team. It's fun to be around. Given all that he's accomplished, I'm excited about this program's future under Steve Fisher."

Stability is a key component of that future in terms of recruiting, player development and community interest. Ultimately, those things contribute to winning basketball games.

"Nobody wants to be recruited by a staff that walks away from them," said Fisher, whose contract runs through the 2012-2013 season. "From the standpoint of the head coach, they know that I'm going to be here. We tell players that straight up. Some of my assistants will be head coaches -- especially if we keep winning -- but the bulk of this staff is intact and will stay that way. We don't have resumes in hand, looking for jobs.

"That's important to a program. In my opinion, continuity is invaluable to recruiting players and sustaining success."

It's unrealistic to think every season will unfold like this one. There will be ebbs. But, if recent history holds -- the Aztecs are in the midst of their sixth straight 20-win season -- down years will still be pretty good.

That's evident by the talent they've attracted, including young players like Kawhi Leonard, Chase Tapley and upstart freshman Jamaal Franklin. Loyalty and program stability were huge factors in attracting such talent.

That's why Tapley is here. The standout guard broke his leg in high school and believed his college opportunities disappeared with a serious injury. As he lay in the hospital, stressing about his future, the phone rang.

It was San Diego State, telling Tapley to get well soon, that the Aztecs would still be recruiting him when he did and that they'd be around to help become a productive player at the college level.

"I'll remember it as long as I live," Tapley said. "All the schools came back when I got healthy, but my choice was made. San Diego State stayed with me, so I was going to stay with them.

"Still, when you commit to a program, you want to work with the same people the whole time. You want to believe that the coaches who swore they'd make you better and wanted you to sign will be around to watch you develop. There's no doubt that Coach Fisher will be, which really puts your mind at ease. It makes me excited about my future and the future of this program."

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### San Diego State's Steve Fisher finds his way back, and it's fab

By Chris Dufresne | New York Times  
March 17, 2011

The "Fab Five" is back in the news and Steve Fisher is preparing a team for another possible Final Four run, but this isn't 1992 or '93 — and this for sure isn't Michigan.

The players still wear droopy shorts — the most indelible contribution made by Chris Webber and Co., but Fisher's hair has turned a silvery gray.

He is 65 now and Michigan is a far-away, fading asterisk — home of the taken-down banners. Fisher was canned in 1997 for being the responsible CEO of a program rocked by scandal. He was never directly implicated in knowing about the wad of cash booster Ed Martin handed out, but Fisher certainly had access to the gym.

Fisher's part of the story might have ended there.

Then, in 1999, he entered a witness protection program called San Diego State basketball, the Aztecs coming off a 4-22 season.

The most famous player in the program had been Tony Gwynn, who still shares

the school's single-game assist record at 18.

Fisher, though, methodically pulled basketball out of the mush pit and showed up at a news conference in advance of Thursday's game against Northern Colorado with six straight 20-win seasons and a 12-year record of 230-151.

His present intersected with his past this week when ESPN's documentary on the "Fab Five" aired just after the NCAA selection committee seeded San Diego State, 32-3, as a No. 2 in the West.

Fisher said he watched a "rough" advance copy of "Fab Five" last week.

And?

"I smiled," he said at the McKale Center, the arena where the "Fab Five" overcame a 19-point deficit to upset UCLA in the second round in 1993. "It brought back a lot of memories. I enjoyed it. I thought it was a good portrayal of who they were, what happened."

Fisher's current players hardly knew of Webber, Jimmy King, Jalen Rose, Juwan Howard and Ray Jackson.

So they watched the film too.

"I didn't know too much about the Fab Five," Aztecs star forward Kawhi Leonard said. "I just knew they were all freshmen and they went far in the tournament."

Teammate Malcolm Thomas: "I just remember long shorts, black socks and they were the best team I've seen."

The "Fab Five" lost the title games of 1992 (to Duke) and 1993 (North Carolina).

Now it's time for a different brand of "fabulous."

**“They said at Michigan he was handed it,’ Aztecs point guard D.J. Gay said. ‘But he built this, here, at San Diego State. Nobody can take that away from him.’”**

— Chris Dufresne (*Los Angeles Times* - "San Diego State's Steve Fisher finds his way back, and it's fab")

San Diego State is actually seeded higher than Michigan was when the No. 6 Wolverines entered the 1992 tournament.

This is red-carpet stuff, the Aztecs.

San Diego State didn't have to take a red-eye to Dayton or connect through Chicago on its way to Cleveland.

These Aztecs have been skid-greased through Tucson, only a hop, skip and jump shots from next week's West Regional in Anaheim.

San Diego State has yet to win an NCAA tournament game but is poised to become 1-6 when it faces Big Sky tournament champion Northern Colorado on Thursday.

No. 2 owns a 100-4 record against No. 15 in the tournament. The last time a No. 2 spit the seed was 2001, when Hampton shocked Iowa State.

What could happen?

OK, this:

In 2008, Northern Colorado came to San Diego and whipped the Aztecs, a fact Fisher has mentioned 200 or 300 times this week.

Think about it, though.

It took Fisher six games to win his only NCAA title at Michigan, in 1989, when he was famously pushed on the tournament stage after Bill Frieder was fired for taking the Arizona State job.

Fisher's 12 years at San Diego State have been the opposite of that head rush.

"They said at Michigan he was handed it," Aztecs point guard D.J. Gay said. "But he built this, here, at San Diego State. Nobody can take that away from him."

It was interesting timing, Fisher and the Fab Five, more than 20 years later, reuniting this week.



What strikes you in watching the documentary is how happily Fisher is involved in it.

Webber refused to participate, for understandable reasons. He called the timeout Michigan didn't have in the 1993 title game against North Carolina and was the center of a federal indictment involving Martin.

Fisher, though, acted as if he were the film's co-producer.

For better and worse, he knows Michigan is part of his legacy.

"I think that's the way he's always been," said Mark Fisher, Steve's son and an Aztecs assistant coach. "It was what it was. It's so positive in our memories and our minds. That time was magical and wonderful, regardless of where the banners were stored. It was an amazing period in college basketball. And we were right there, front-row seat."

Mark Fisher, standing in the hallway outside of San Diego State's locker room, said people make too big a deal about his dad's coaching resurgence.

He sees Michigan-to-San Diego State as more of a continuum.

Then he paused and thought about it.

"Obviously, this has been a really special season," he said. "We've absolutely embraced and cherished and cherished and appreciated this year, it's been amazing."

San Diego State has allowed Fisher to separate himself from the less-flattering images of Michigan. He also dispelled the notion he was a two-hit coaching wonder.

Fisher's work at San Diego State has percolated from the ground up — and he's been scandal-free in his dozen years.

"I believed with all my heart that I would coach beyond Michigan after I got fired," Fisher said. "...I think I would have gotten another opportunity someplace else, but who knows whether we could have had the magical opportunity that we're having now?"

Isn't it Fab?

"I closed my eyes and said, 'I think we can be pretty good here,' " Fisher said. "How good is pretty good? I don't know that I ever thought about that."

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#### Aztecs get first win ever in NCAA Tournament

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 18, 2011

There was the 22-footer that went about 17, the air-balled layup, the hook shot into the side of the backboard. The brick in the lane. The other air-balled three-pointer. The short-armed free throws.

The defensive lapses. The zero offensive rebounds for the first 13 minutes. The maddening tendency of letting a No. 15 seed hang around, of letting the boys from Greeley, Colo., dream a little.

San Diego State retreated to the locker room Thursday afternoon and braced for the fiery lecture they figured they deserved, similar to the hair-dryer treatment that sparked an inspired second half at Air Force last month.

Coach Steve Fisher walked in the room and closed the door. Here it came ...

Or not.

"He talked to us like regular people do, like we were having a casual conversation," captain D.J. Gay said. "It seemed as if when he came in, he knew that we had 12 players who all had a lot going on in their heads. It put us all at ease, calmed us down, got us on the same page."

Problem solved. Ship righted.

After looking every bit like a team that had never won a Division I NCAA Tournament game (and was obsessing about it), the second-seeded Aztecs rolled past Northern Colorado in the second half for a 68-50 win that sent a monkey hop-

ping into the Arizona desert after being firmly attached to their back.

The school's last NCAA Tournament win: against UC Davis in Div. II in 1968, a gap of — SDSU's media relations staff actually calculated this — 15,713 days.

"This was a win for everybody that's been associated with San Diego State," Fisher said, "for everybody that's put on a San Diego State uniform or walked in the halls and gone to class there. We've got a lot of proud Aztecs today."

SDSU (33-2) now gets seventh-seeded Temple, a 66-64 winner Thursday against Penn State on a twisting lean-in jumper by Juan Fernandez at the buzzer, here at 3:10 p.m. Saturday.

Temple presents a different set of tactical issues with its thick guards, massive center and tough, physical, East Coast, walk-it-up, grind-it-out, dive-for-every-loose-ball style. But the bigger issue for the Aztecs might be whether Thursday's air balls and poor decisions and missed chippies and mental errors were merely a function of the pressure to end the tournament drought, or indicative of deeper problems.

"I think a lot of us were nervous," forward Malcolm Thomas admitted. "I know I was. A lot of us were rushing stuff. But we calmed down. Coach Fisher told us, 'Just play basketball. Just play Aztec basketball.'

"All those nerves should be gone now."

SDSU did trail in this game, for 16 seconds midway through the first half. It was tied at 20 when the Aztecs went on a 10-0 run, only to close the half with five missed shots and a turnover to trim the margin to a tenuous six points.

Northern Colorado's Devon Beitzel (25 points) finally lived up to the Jimmer Fredette comparisons early in the second half, scoring 11 straight points for the Bears — nine coming on deep three-pointers after running off screens. That closed SDSU's lead to 38-35 and elicited groans (followed by eerie silence) from the thousand or so Aztecs fans who made their way here.

But the team that missed 27 of its first 38 shots finally settled down. D.J. Gay drained a three — his first points in 66-plus minutes — and James Rahon made a three and Rahon made a deep two and Rahon made another three and Billy White followed in a Rahon miss with one of his seven offensive rebounds. That made it 51-35, and you could probably hear the collective exhale back in San Diego.

"Thought we followed the game plan for about 34 minutes," said Northern Colorado coach B.J. Hill, whose team was making its first NCAA Tournament appearance. "Hats off to San Diego State. They're even better in person than what they are on video."

In many respects, it was vintage Aztecs. Stifling defense and only four turnovers kept them in the game when they couldn't shoot. Then shooting (they made six of their final eight three-point attempts) put the game away.

That, and too much Kawhi Leonard.

The sophomore scored SDSU's first eight points — a contested bank shot and a pair of three-pointers — en route to 21 points and his obligatory 10 rebounds. The play Northern Colorado no doubt will be talking about for a while: flying in from the right side to grab a Gay miss and guide it over the rim.

"He's a lottery pick," said Bears forward Chris Kaba, who drew the unenviable defensive assignment. "You can't say too much more about that. ... A lot of shots, I was right there and he still just raised up and found a way to get in. He is a very good player. I fully intend to see him in the (NBA) draft."

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#### Gay ends scoring drought with three

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 18, 2011

If you were to identify a singular moment that unlocked the conundrum that had become Northern Colorado, it was a three-pointer with 13:40 left by a guy who had missed 10 straight shots and hadn't scored in exactly 66 minutes, 24.3 seconds.

By D.J. Gay.

"If felt good, you know, to finally hit a shot," Gay said.

Gay's last points had come on the dramatic game-winner with 4.3 seconds left against UNLV in the semifinals of the Mountain West Conference tournament. He followed that with an oh-fer against BYU in the final, and another oh-fer in the first half against Northern Colorado. And three more misses to open the second half, including one of the previous possession.

In the first 26 games, he shot 41.7 percent. Over the last nine: 27.6 percent (24-of-87).

"I've been in a slump lately," said Gay, who finished with five points on 2-of-11 shooting (1-of-5 behind the arc). "My offensive game hasn't really been what it has been in the past. But the key thing is doing other things to help this team ... My shot will come. I just have to stay confident in myself.

"And when I get the opportunity (to shoot), take it."

Seeing their point guard make a shot seemed to inspire the Aztecs, who went on a 13-0 run to seal the first Division I NCAA tournament victory in school history.

"It energizes you when your captain starts to get it going," forward Malcolm Thomas said. "D.J. is never afraid of taking the big shot."

Not the least bit concerned is Coach Steve Fisher.

"If you come back and look at the film and watch how he guards and watch how he helps (on defense) and moves the ball and does things that win," Fisher said, "I'm not going to get caught up – and I'm not going to allow D.J. to get caught up – in going oh for whatever he did.

"You can't judge success individually or team-wise on 2-of-11. We don't win without D.J. in this lineup. He knows that, and I know that, and everybody else knows that."

#### Special visitor

As the highest seed here, the Aztecs were given Arizona's locker room at the McKale Center, which has blue leather recliners for every player adorned with the Wildcats logo.

It also got them a post-game visit from former Arizona coach Lute Olson.

"Lute and I have been friends a long, long time," Fisher said. "He came in his locker room and went around and talked to some of our players individually ... He was very, very complimentary."

#### Streaking

Some streaks that stayed alive Thursday: SDSU won its 45th straight game when leading with five minutes to go; its 42nd straight against unranked opponents; its 16th straight against a team from the state of Colorado (a school record); its seventh straight on a neutral court.

#### Notes

The McKale Center, surprisingly, was not close to being sold out. The lower bowl was full, but the rim of upper level seats was virtually empty ... Billy White's 12 points and 13 rebounds gave him consecutive double-doubles for the first time in his career. He is averaging 16.5 points and 9.3 rebounds in four postseason games this year ... The four turnovers equals the season low ... Unlike Wednesday's practice that was open to the public, today's SDSU practice at the McKale Center is closed.

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### One giant leap for Aztecs with victory over Bears

By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 18, 2011

Live long enough and you add chapter upon chapter to your "Eyewitness to History Journal." Oh, the things that you will see, and this is someone who has seen more chokes than Heimlich.

I've seen man walk on the moon.

I've seen the first heart transplant.

I've seen a president quit.

I've seen the Berlin Wall fall.

I've seen a test tube baby born.

I've seen the best golfer in the world ruin his life.

I've seen Adam Sandler become a box office star.

Oh, so many things I never thought I'd see. And now I can add one more. San Diego State's men's basketball team has won an NCAA Tournament game.

Be still, every heart that has been pulverized by the San Diego mallet of disappointment for three-plus decades.

Except, in this case, life is incomplete. One is all anybody wanted. One, that's all. For so long. Now it isn't enough. Now greed sets in. This is how it is, I guess, in the world of big-time college basketball. Never enough.

It's about the other half now. How it lives.

SDSU Athletic Director Jim Sterk said he was "nervous" before Thursday's opening game vs. game Northern Colorado. Of course. He hasn't been an Aztec long, but it doesn't take an eon garbed in red polo shirts to know where you are and where SDSU hasn't been.

It has never been this far. As in never.

State's 68-50 first-round Tournament win over the Bears here in McKale Center not only was a landmark for a university (and a city, for that matter) gone hoarse in the shout-about department, but it proved the Aztecs don't have to be good to be good enough to survive.

And that may be very important as this 33-2 team prepares for a second-round Saturday game vs. Temple, the winner getting a ticket to the Sweet 16 next week in Anaheim.

Of course, things are going to get more difficult — especially if the Aztecs can't just make shots, but easy shots. This is how it went for a great deal of Thursday. Bears coach B.J. Hill talked of how well the Aztecs shot, when for most of the game they couldn't hit the broad side of a barn if they were wood in the broad side of a barn.

We're in the truth business. The Aztecs, as is their wont at times, didn't shoot well, especially in the first half, when they made 11 of 34 shots and shoved up far too many threes, making 5-of-14 against a much shorter and far less athletic Big Sky Conference champion. They missed so many inside shots, or this might have been 45-24 at halftime instead of 30-24.

Kawhi Leonard, State's superb sophomore forward, made his first three shots, scoring eight points (two threes), but after that, throughout the first half, the basket was sealed like a Civil War casket. State missed far too many gimmies, especially inside, where they are as good as anyone.

In the second half, after a slow start in which the Bears closed it to 38-35, State found itself, thanks primarily to sharpshooting reserve guard James Rahon (12 points, 2-for-2 on threes), forward Billy White's personal wake-up call (12 points, 13 rebounds) and a three by point guard D.J. Gay that seemed to ignite his teammates.

The Aztecs went on one of their runs, this a 13-pointer, and that was that. They weren't losing anymore, they were advancing, and it was Gay's three that fanned the coals. He made the basket to beat UNLV with 4 seconds to play in the Mountain West Conference Tournament semifinals and didn't score in the final win over BYU.

Thursday's three came with 13:40 to play in the second half, meaning the team's leader had gone 66 minutes and 24 seconds without scoring a point.

"D.J. Gay is not in a slump," said Aztecs coach Steve Fisher, who turned up the defensive pressure after intermission. "The ball is just not going in for him. D.J. Gay is a winner. He does things that win. We don't win without D.J. in the lineup."

OK.

In any event, it seems as though a resounding sigh of relief has come to this team. They didn't play particularly well, but well enough, and did something

that's never been done before.

"Relief?" Gay said. "Kinda."

"It was a relief, but we still have work to do," said guard Chase Tapley, who played well (14 points) and had to run around all day trying to hound "Jimmer Fredette Jr.," Bears guard Devon Beitzel (25 points).

"I'm not going to say 'relief,'" Fisher said. "I would have been despondent had we not won, obviously. But I was not extra nervous about a game we were supposed to win. This is the first time in my tenure at San Diego State that we were supposed to win a (tournament) game. ... I'm proud."

No reason to be despondent now. Temple is next. Temple, which needed a last-second shot here Thursday to beat Penn State, is beatable, but not bad. The nerves should be gone now.

"We had multiple shots early, a lot of inside shots, that didn't go in," Fisher said. "I think we got a little frustrated."

Frustration overcome. Another San Diego State first.

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### Leonard's grip on Aztecs' success has been huge

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 19, 2011

When Kawhi Leonard was born, Kim Robertson noticed her son had a birthmark on his neck.

"I said, 'Good, they can't switch babies on me,'" Robertson says.

Then she scanned down his body and stopped at his hands. They were enormous. Big, wide palms. Long, curling fingers. Completely disproportionate to the rest of the physique. Now she really knew nobody could switch babies on her.

But she took Kawhi home and got on with their life and never gave her son's hands much thought. They lived in Riverside; there was no need to buy winter gloves.

Leonard himself never thought much of it, either, until he was a freshman at Canyon Springs High. He was a wide receiver on the football team, and the school didn't have receiver gloves that fit him in the equipment room. The coaches sent him to a local sporting goods store to get some, and the clerk brought out his biggest size.

Didn't fit. They had to special order some.

And that was before Leonard hit his growth spurt.

The average male hand, measured from the base of the palm to tip of the middle finger, is 7 3/8 inches. For women, it's 6 1/4 inches. Leonard's are 9 3/8 inches.

"Yeah," he says, "I have pretty big hands."

The hands that guide them.

San Diego State is 33-2 this season and a No. 2 seed in the NCAA Tournament and a victory against Temple today from reaching the Sweet 16, a promise land that a school devoid of any real basketball tradition had never dared dream about before Leonard arrived on campus last year. There are other pieces around him — a senior point guard, two starting senior forwards, a veteran bench, a veteran coach — but it is increasingly apparent that this team will go as far as its sophomore forward leads it.

The Aztecs won a Division I NCAA Tournament game for the first time in school history on Thursday, 68-50 against 15th-seeded Northern Colorado, and Leonard wasted no time establishing his dominance. He scored SDSU's first eight points and finished with 21 points to go with 10 rebounds.

NBA scouts and opposing coaches marvel at his unique athletic package. The broad shoulders. The long arms (his wing span is 7 feet, 3/8 inches). The powerful legs. The relentless energy. The uncanny instincts.

The day before their game, Northern Colorado coach B.J. Hill was asked what concerned him about Leonard.

"That's a long list," Hill said. "He's a deadly combination of size, athleticism and motor. You don't really see guys who are 6-7, 225 (pounds) and have his skill set and play with the tenacity that he does for every second that he is out there. I mean, he is what all coaches dream of.

"A lot of times you can get little guards at 5-10, 5-11 that play like that. But to find a 6-7 guy like that ...

"I mean, we don't face anybody like that in the Big Sky."

The conversation, though, eventually returns to the same thing. Those hands.

"I thought I had big hands," says 6-9 Aztecs forward Malcolm Thomas, Leonard's roommate, "until I met him."

"I put my hand up to his once," forward Tim Shelton says. "It made me feel like a little kid, and we're the same height."

They are his greatest asset and, some NBA scouts concede, perhaps his greatest liability.

They allow him to extend one of those telephone poles disguised as arms, get a finger on a ball and ... thwaaap, it's his. The Human Avatar, his teammates call him.

"If I get my hand on the ball, I feel like it should be mine," says Leonard, who averages 10.6 rebounds and has 23 double-doubles (double figures in points and rebounds) in this season alone. "If I just deflect it, I get mad."

But at 6-7, scouts say, Leonard isn't tall enough to play in the post at the next level, and NBA wings generally must be lethal from the perimeter. And Leonard isn't, or isn't yet.

He spent all summer working on his shot, trying not to sling it from behind his head, shooting up more, releasing it quicker. He has improved noticeably this season, yet still shoots a pedestrian 29.6 percent behind a three-point arc that is three feet closer than in the NBA.

Players with saucer hands traditionally have not been outstanding perimeter shooters (Julius Erving, Chris Webber, Shaquille O'Neal, Rajon Rondo), the theory being that it's akin to a normal person trying to shoot a ping-pong ball. The ball can roll out of the hand's shooting pocket too easily, something Leonard admits happening to him at times.

**"Leonard genuinely seems uncomfortable talking about his NBA future, saying he'll consult Fisher and his mother after the season. His mother says she'll defer to Fisher and her son."**

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Leonard's grip on Aztecs' success has been huge")

So far, though, it doesn't appear to be a major deterrent for NBA teams. It also helps that this is considered a weak class, and several mock drafts have Leonard going between 11th and 14th.

SDSU coach Steve Fisher has said he would advise Leonard to leave college early if he's projected as one of the 14 "lottery picks" and to stay if he's a second-rounder. If he's somewhere in between, Fisher says, "He has a decision to make."

Leonard genuinely seems uncomfortable talking about his NBA future, saying he'll consult Fisher and his mother after the season. His mother says she'll defer to Fisher and her son.

"Let's get this straight," Robertson says. "He doesn't have to take care of me. There's no hardship that he has to go to the NBA ... I've been at my job (at Amtrak) for 18 years. Money has never been an issue. I know everyone wants to buy the mom a house. But I'm not starving. He's not starving.

"Whatever decision he makes, I want it to be for him. I've done everything that I'm supposed to do as a parent. Now I want him to do what he wants to do. And right now, he wants to concentrate on this season and take his team to the Final Four."

Grab a pinky and hang on for the ride.

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**Prodigal shootist Rahon helps Aztecs thrive**By Nick Canepa | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 19, 2011

It can't be simple coincidence that we're 70 miles from Tombstone. Every basketball court is the O.K. Corral for James Rahon. Every moment is High Noon.

Rahon is the unhired gun, the prodigal shootist who left his territory only to return and help bring peace, justice and order to the town left behind. He is the liquidator, the zone buster with the nerve of a mongoose, who jumps in from the shadows when the snakes have surfaced.

It's hard to say San Diego State's basketball team wouldn't have been successful without Rahon, but it's easy to believe the Aztecs wouldn't be 33-2 had he chosen not to return to his hometown.

Maybe they wouldn't be meeting Temple today in the Round of 32 of the NCAA Tournament if Rahon and his long-range arsenal remained in Santa Clara, his choice of college coming out of Torrey Pines High.

State is not 33-2 and a No. 2 Tournament seed solely because of starters Kawhi Leonard, D.J. Gay, Malcolm Thomas, Billy White and Chase Tapley. Many times they've needed Rahon's ammo, especially when opponents have gone to a zone defense, jamming the inside, forcing the Aztecs to shoot over it, a skill in which the regulars are only occasionally proficient.

Would they have defeated Northern Colorado here Thursday in their first tournament game without Rahon? Probably. But it's highly doubtful the final would have been 68-50 without the 6-5 sophomore guard coming off the bench and hitting 4-of-7 shots, two threes, and scoring 12 points.

SDSU did not shoot well — inside or out — vs. Northern Colorado until it went on the 13-0 second-half run fueled by a pair of Rahon three-pointers and a two-point basket. He's exactly what the Aztecs need, and he can do more than shoot. He can drive and defend.

"Rahon is a spark for us," Gay says. "He can come in the game and knock down shots when we're struggling offensively and he's a good defender as well. When he comes on the court we don't lose anything at all. We can always count on him."

By now everyone knows Aztecs coach Steve Fisher and his staff recruited him out of Torrey Pines, but Rahon chose Santa Clara. He started 17 games as a freshman for the Broncos, playing in 32. He led the team in three-point shooting (40.7 percent) and scored 25 points in back-to-back games.

But he then chose to leave the Bay Area and was welcomed to SDSU by Fisher, who had recruited him since his sophomore year at Torrey Pines. Under transfer rules, Rahon was forced to redshirt the 2009-2010 season, when he certainly could have been useful.

"We were so excited when he transferred in," Fisher says. "He can do more than just shoot the ball. But he's a rhythm shooter; he can get on a run where he can make multiple shots. He did that (vs. Northern Colorado) in the stretch that kind of took a close game and gave us some separation."

Leaving Santa Clara was just something Rahon wanted to do, and he had the blessing of his parents, John and Emelie.

"Nothing's better than living in San Diego," Rahon says. "I missed my family; I can see my brother play now. It's a big deal for me. Santa Clara was a great learning experience; it's helped me this year.

"I had lived in San Diego my whole life and I just thought it would be a good experience to get away. My parents said if I didn't like it to come back. Coach Fisher welcomed me with open arms. It was the right decision for me."

His mom's thrilled to be able to watch her sons — James' younger brother, Joe, was a standout junior guard at Torrey Pines this season — play all the time.

"It was about four games a week for a while," says Emelie, who's in Tucson with John. "It's neat for James to be a part of the community now. He likes to work

hard and win, do what he needs to do.

"At Santa Clara, it was other things for him, not basketball. We respected his decision to come back. He's on a team that figures out a way to make things work. We tell James to enjoy the moment. Every kid wants to be where the Aztecs are now."

Situations, scores, nothing seems to bother Rahon.

"Rahon is the guy who leaves his jersey on the bus," assistant head coach Brian Dutcher says. "He doesn't feel pressure. He doesn't know time or score. He just plays like the game's on the line. When he gets a shot, he takes it. To him, the first minute of the game is like the last minute of the game.

**"It's hard to say San Diego State's basketball team wouldn't have been successful without Rahon, but it's easy to believe the Aztecs wouldn't be 33-2 had he chosen not to return to his hometown."**

- Nick Canepa (*San Diego Union-Tribune* - "Prodigal shootist Rahon helps Aztecs thrive")

"We recruited James hard; we were blessed when he came back. I think he can go to 16-18 points a game for us next year. He might lead the (Mountain West) conference in scoring."

Look for him today. Temple plays very little pure zone anymore, mostly a soft man-to-man defense that can sag and make it tough to score inside. The Aztecs have had 11 games where they've shot less than 25 percent on threes and twice have Blutaraskied — 0-18 vs. Cal Poly and 0-7 vs. Wisconsin-Green Bay. Rahon has made 51 of his 119 three-point tries (42.9 percent).

"This is not a role I'm used to playing," Rahon says. "But I've accepted it. We've got so many weapons. Coach Fisher calls me his sixth starter. Being a scorer off the bench, I come in and look for my shot."

That's exactly what shootists do.

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**Aztecs in good hands**By Jeff Passan | Yahoo!Sports  
March 19, 2011

As scouts discuss San Diego State forward Kawhi Leonard's future in the NBA, they'll throw around all sorts of comparisons. Nowhere in their reports will be the most obvious.

E.T.

Like extra terrestrial. He was probably too short for the league, sure, and his physique resembled Hot Plate Williams'. But those hands. My, those hands. They're the sort that trigger scouts' salivary glands, and Leonard's are dead ringers for the friendly little alien's.

From the base of his palm to the tip of his middle finger, Leonard measures at least 10 inches — the same as Yao Ming, who has got nearly a foot of actual height on the 6-foot-7 Leonard. They're bigger than those of Rajon Rondo, whose mitts are renowned in NBA circles; bigger even than Michael Jordan's, whose hands were a secret weapon.

When the second-seeded Aztecs go against seventh-seeded Temple on Saturday at 6:10 ET, Leonard hopes to summon another of E.T.'s finger qualities — the magic touch — and earn a berth in the Sweet 16.

Before his arrival two years ago, San Diego State lacked a marquee player for coach Steve Fisher to build around in his resurrection of the program. Should Leonard leave after this season — and all indications point to him doing so — he'll be the first San Diego State player taken in the first round since Michael Cage went No. 14 in 1984, and perhaps the highest ever.

Leonard can shoot well, defying the stereotype of large-handed players like Shaquille O'Neal. He's got the lateral quickness to defend. And his ability to rebound is uncommon for a player of his size and at his position.

"He's got the biggest hands we've seen since Chris Webber, enormously big, and that's why he's such a great rebounder," said Aztecs assistant coach Brian Dutcher, who coached Webber at Michigan nearly 20 years ago. "A lot of it is timing and desire, and he's got a lot of that, but he's got more hands. When the ball hits them, it's not going anywhere."

Leonard first realized his gift in 10th grade, when his teammates at Canyon Springs High in Moreno Valley, Calif., couldn't help but notice them.

"During practice," Leonard said, "they'd tell me to get 'em off them."

While Leonard arrived on campus highly touted, his teammates didn't realize the physical specimen with whom they'd be competing. In practice, he would stand at the top of the 3-point arc and hold the ball out one handed, a la Jordan. His ability to grab one-handed rebounds still mystifies them.

"The first time I saw them, I was like, 'Damn,' " teammate Tim Shelton said. "I didn't know people could have hands that big."

Now, they're not as big as Shaq's, whose 12-inch monsters are the size of an outfielder's mitt. Julius Erving's are supposedly 12 inches, too, though that's likely apocryphal. Wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald's measure 10 1/2 inches, reportedly the same as Brett Favre's. Andre the Giant's hands were probably bigger.

The average male's hands measure 7.4 inches, though it's difficult to picture what that 2 1/2-inch difference looks like. So Jamie McConeghy, an assistant sports information director for San Diego State, placed his right hand against Leonard's left. Onlookers gasped, then giggled. McConeghy's fingertips barely reached Leonard's second knuckle.

It was nothing new for Leonard. He's used to shaking people's hands and hearing how his fingers resemble tentacles. As long as they help him score and rebound, he's fine with them. And should his game go cold and the NBA thing not work out, there's always the backup plan.

Allstate could hire him as a spokesman.

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### Aztecs defeat Temple to reach NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16

By Mark Zeigler | San Diego Union-Tribune  
March 20, 2011

San Diego State is going to Anaheim.

The road went east and then south through Tucson, there were a couple of flat tires, the front bumper is hanging on with bailing wire, the transmission is sputtering, the radiator is hissing, but the Aztecs are headed to Anaheim and the NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16.

In March, there are no pretty road trips.

In March, there are no pretty wins.

There are only wins, or losses. Continue driving, or go home.

"I guess it's better to have an ugly win," Kawhi Leonard said, "than a pretty loss."

It took two overtimes and some frayed nerves, but the second-seeded Aztecs gutted out a 71-64 win against Temple on Saturday at Arizona's McKale Center that, in the space of 50 wrenching minutes, showed their frailties and their potential immortality.

"We didn't want to go home," captain D.J. Gay said. "We did make some mistakes, but we did a good job, you know, of fighting back through it. Everybody had each other's back. And that's why we were successful."

Or as coach Steve Fisher put it: "We find ways."

As the final seconds in the second overtime ticked off, the large contingent of SDSU fans that had transformed the McKale Center into a Viejas East began chanting, "We want Kemba, we want Kemba," a reference to heralded UConn guard Kemba Walker. And they'll get him after the third-seeded Huskies beat Cincinnati 69-58 to advance to the Sweet 16 game opposite SDSU.

It is one of those delectable matchups that underdogs everywhere only dream about: A school with two NCAA titles and 76 all-time tournament wins ... against the school that had never been ranked in a major poll before October and got its

first tournament win on Thursday.

It nearly didn't happen.

The Aztecs (34-2) led by as many as 11 points in the first half and seven midway through the second half, and they had the ball to end both regulation and the first overtime. But the pesky Owls refused to go away, refused to die, like some sort of evil bird in a low-budget horror flick.

"“We didn't want to go home,” captain D.J. Gay said. “We did make some mistakes, but we did a good job, you know, of fighting back through it. Everybody had each other's back. And that's why we were successful.”"

- Mark Zeigler (*San Diego Union-Tribune* -  
"Aztecs defeat Temple to reach NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16")

And the Aztecs didn't exactly put them away.

There were the 10 possessions on either side of half-time that produced exactly two points, the 95-second stretch without crossing midcourt, the single basket over the final seven minutes of regulation, the bonehead turnover in the first overtime that gave Temple a layup and a 61-58 lead, the two bonehead turnovers in the second overtime that gave the Owls new life after the game appeared over.

"When we got a little sloppy and we had some turnovers and they had a three-point lead, we didn't panic," Fisher said. "We didn't do that ... We bowed our back and flexed our muscle and stayed with it and found a way, with a little bit of good fortune, to get a victory."

Temple hung around by making the Aztecs play 35 seconds of defense, missing at the shot-clock buzzer, getting the rebound and making them play 35 seconds more. It banked in three-pointers. It scrapped for loose balls. It switched between its base man-to-man defense and a 1-2-2 zone, and a 2-3 zone, and even a triangle-and-two (part zone, part man).

"Coach came in at halftime and said we were pretty lucky to be in the position we were in," said guard Ramone Moore, whose team trailed 36-31. "He was right."

The Aztecs had the ball last in both regulation and overtime, and couldn't convert either.

In regulation, Chase Tapley had a decent look on the right baseline that rolled off the rim. Tapley appeared to have his jersey grabbed just before he shot, but — a common theme all game — there was no whistle.

In the first overtime, Malcolm Thomas got the ball on the right block and shot a 10-foot baseline hook that missed.

The Aztecs went ahead 65-61 in the second overtime and then hung onto the mast as the boat rocked wildly in turbulent seas. What saved them: huge blocks by Thomas and Billy White, and a steal by Leonard that led to the exclamation point, a two-handed dunk.

"These guys are really athletic," said Temple center Lavoy Allen, whose jump hook was dramatically blocked by Thomas. "I've played against athletic guys before, but these guys were a whole different team."

Team being the operative word.

Leonard didn't score for opening 15 minutes and was whistled for traveling three times but still managed 16 points and nine rebounds. D.J. Gay continued his shooting slump (3-of-13) but contributed five assists against just one turnover while playing the full 50 minutes. White got his third foul early in the second half but — in a heady move by Fisher — never came out and never fouled again, finishing with 16 points and 13 rebounds (10 and 10 after half-time).

The free throw shooting that was supposed to be their Achilles heel?

The Aztecs were 9-of-9.

The buzzer sounded, and Tapley collapsed onto the court, partly out of exhaustion, partly out of elation. A few teammates rushed over and lifted him to his feet.

"My team picked me up," Tapley said, "like they always do."

# NCAA Media Information - Anaheim

For complete NCAA media policies and other information, visit: [www.ncaa.com/media](http://www.ncaa.com/media)

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949-261-2525 desk; 949-838-6124 cell

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/laxah-anaheim-marriott/>

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (All Times Local)

### Wednesday, March 23

#### General

9 a.m. Work areas and courtside open to media  
10 a.m. Sports information directors meeting  
10:30 a.m. Team entrance opens  
11 a.m. Facility doors open to public  
11 a.m.-1 p.m. Media buffet  
4:15 p.m. Pre-tournament meeting  
4:30 p.m. Strobe test

#### Practices (open to media and general public)

**Noon-12:50 p.m. Connecticut**  
1:00-1:50 p.m. Arizona  
**2:10-3:00 p.m. San Diego State**  
3:10-4:00 p.m. Duke

#### News Conferences in Interview Room

**1:00-1:15 p.m. Connecticut coach**  
**1:15-1:30 p.m. Connecticut student-athletes**  
**1:30-1:45 p.m. San Diego State student-athletes**  
**1:45-2:00 p.m. San Diego State coach**  
2:00-2:15 p.m. Arizona coach  
2:15-2:30 p.m. Arizona student-athletes  
2:30-2:45 p.m. Duke student-athletes  
2:45-3:00 p.m. Duke coach

#### \*Media Activities Outside Interview Room

**1:00-1:15 p.m. San Diego State coach, NCAA radio network interview**  
1:00-1:30 p.m. Connecticut student-athletes available locker room  
**1:15-1:30 p.m. San Diego State coach, Turner/CBS interview**  
1:15-1:30 p.m. Duke coach, NCAA radio network interview  
1:30-1:45 p.m. Connecticut coach, Turner/CBS interview  
**1:30-2:00 p.m. San Diego State student-athletes available in locker room**  
1:45-2:00 p.m. Connecticut coach, NCAA radio network interview  
2:00-2:30 p.m. Arizona student-athletes available in locker room  
2:15-2:30 p.m. Duke coach, Turner/CBS interview  
2:30-2:45 p.m. Arizona coach, Turner/CBS interview  
2:30-3:00 p.m. Duke student-athletes available in locker room  
2:45-3:00 p.m. Arizona coach, NCAA radio network interview

\* Each team's top seven (7) student-athletes (and any other individuals requested by the media) who are not in the interview room shall be available to the media in the locker room during the time the coach and selected student-athletes are participating in the news conference.

### Thursday, March 24

#### General

12:15 p.m. Backstage areas open to media  
2:15 p.m. Courtside open to media and media buffet  
2:45 p.m. Facility doors open to public  
**4:15 p.m. No. 3 Connecticut vs. No. 2 San Diego State**  
6:45 p.m. No. 5 Arizona vs. No. 1 Duke

### Friday, March 25

10 a.m. Backstage areas open to media

#### Practices (closed)

1:15-2:45 p.m. Game No. 1 Winner  
2:55-4:25 p.m. Game No. 2 Winner

#### News Conferences in Interview Room

1:50-2:20 p.m. Game No. 2 Winner student-athletes and coach on dais  
2:20-2:50 p.m. Game No. 2 Winner individual news conferences, coach on dais, student-athletes in breakout rooms  
2:55-3:25 p.m. Game No. 1 Winner student-athletes and coach on dais  
3:25-3:55 p.m. Game No. 1 Winner individual news conferences, coach on dais, student-athletes in breakout rooms

#### \*Media Activities Outside Interview Room

1:00-1:30 p.m. Game No. 2 Winner student-athletes and coach, Turner/CBS interview  
1:35-1:45 p.m. Game No. 2 Winner student-athletes and coach, NCAA radio network  
4:00-4:30 p.m. Game No. 1 Winner student-athletes and coach, Turner/CBS interview  
4:35-4:45 p.m. Game No. 1 Winner student-athletes and coach, NCAA radio network

\*Each team's top seven (7) student-athletes (and any other individuals requested by the media) who are not in the interview room shall be available to the media in the locker room during the time the coach and selected student-athletes are participating in the news conference.

### Saturday, March 26

4 hours before game Backstage areas open to media  
2 hours before game 1 Courtside open to media and media buffet  
1.5 hours before game Facility doors open to public  
TBA Regional championship game

#### Postgame Interviews

Cooling-Off Period. A 10-minute cooling-off period has been set aside for the losing coach (five minutes for the winning coach) to be with the student-athletes in the locker room after each game. For all games, the period begins when the coach enters the locker room after the game. The media coordination staff should limit the time the winning team waits in the holding area, keeping them in the locker room until the losing team is nearly finished in the interview room. A coach may shorten the cooling-off period, but may not extend it. The coach and student-athletes must report to the interview room after the cooling-off period ends.

Order of Appearance. The losing coach and student-athletes shall be scheduled in the interview room before the winning coach and student-athletes.

Participating Student-Athletes. The sports information director, working with the head coach and a designated pool reporter representing the USBWA, shall designate a minimum of two student-athletes to participate in the postgame news conference. Primary consideration will be given to student-athletes who had the biggest impact on the game.

# 2011 NCAA® Division I Men's Basketball Championship

Second Round  
MARCH 17-18

Third Round  
MARCH 19-20

Regional Semifinals  
MARCH 24-25

Regional Finals  
MARCH 26-27

National Semifinals  
APRIL 2

Regional Finals  
MARCH 26-27

Regional Semifinals  
MARCH 24-25

Third Round  
MARCH 19-20

Second Round  
MARCH 17-18

## First Four

**E** **16** UTSA (70)  
Mar 16  
**E** **16** Alabama St. (61)  
Mar 16

**SW** **11** USC (46)  
Mar 16  
**SW** **11** VCU (59)  
Mar 16

**SE** **16** UNC Asheville (81)  
Mar 16  
**SE** **16** UALR (77)  
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**1** Kansas (73)  
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**16** Boston U. (53)  
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**8** UNLV (62)  
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**9** Illinois (73)  
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**5** West Virginia (84)  
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**12** Clemson (76)  
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**4** Kentucky (59)  
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**13** Princeton (57)  
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**6** Xavier (55)  
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**11** Marquette (66)  
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**3** Syracuse (77)  
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**14** Indiana St. (58)  
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**7** Washington (68)  
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**10** Georgia (65)  
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**2** North Carolina (102)  
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**15** Long Island (87)  
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**1** Duke (87)  
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**16** Hampton (45)  
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**8** Michigan (75)  
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**9** Tennessee (45)  
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**5** Arizona (77)  
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**12** Memphis (75)  
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**13** Oakland (81)  
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**6** Cincinnati (78)  
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**11** Missouri (63)  
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**3** Connecticut (81)  
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**14** Bucknell (52)  
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**7** Temple (66)  
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**10** Penn St. (64)  
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**2** San Diego St. (68)  
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**15** Northern Colo. (50)  
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**1** Ohio St. (98)  
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**5** Kansas St. (65)  
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**12** Utah St. (68)  
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**4** Wisconsin (70)  
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**11** Gonzaga (67)  
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**3** BYU (74)  
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**14** Wofford (66)  
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**Final Four®**  
HOUSTON  
APRIL 2-4

**National Championship**  
APRIL 4

## EAST NEWARK

**1** Ohio St. (98)  
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**ALL TIMES EASTERN**

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# 2011 NCAA® Division I Men's Basketball Championship

Second Round MARCH 17-18    Third Round MARCH 19-20    Regional Semifinals MARCH 24-25    Regional Finals MARCH 26-27    National Semifinals APRIL 2    National Semifinals APRIL 2    Regional Finals MARCH 26-27    Regional Semifinals MARCH 24-25    Third Round MARCH 19-20    Second Round MARCH 17-18

## First Four

<b>E</b> 16 <b>UTSA</b> 70 Mar 16	<b>E</b> 12 <b>UAB</b> 52 Mar 15	First Round DAYTON March 15-16	<b>SW</b> 11 <b>USC</b> 46 Mar 16	<b>SE</b> 16 <b>UNC Asheville</b> 81 Mar 15
16 <b>Alabama St.</b> 61	12 <b>Clemson</b> 70	Watch On <b>truTV</b>	11 <b>VCU</b> 59	16 <b>UALR</b> 77



**Final Four®**  
HOUSTON  
APRIL 2-4

**National Championship**  
APRIL 4

1 <b>Ohio St.</b> (32-2) 75 Mar 18
16 <b>UTSA</b> (19-13) 46
8 <b>George Mason</b> (26-6) 61 Mar 18
9 <b>Villanova</b> (21-11) 57
5 <b>West Virginia</b> (20-11) 84 Mar 17
12 <b>Clemson</b> (21-11) 76
4 <b>Kentucky</b> (25-8) 59 Mar 17
13 <b>Princeton</b> (25-6) 57
6 <b>Xavier</b> (24-7) 55 Mar 18
11 <b>Marquette</b> (20-14) 66
3 <b>Syracuse</b> (26-7) 77 Mar 18
14 <b>Indiana St.</b> (20-13) 58
7 <b>Washington</b> (23-10) 68 Mar 18
10 <b>Georgia</b> (21-11) 65
2 <b>North Carolina</b> (26-7) 102 Mar 18
15 <b>Long Island</b> (27-5) 87

1 <b>Ohio St.</b> 98 Cleveland Mar 20
8 <b>George Mason</b> 66
5 <b>West Virginia</b> 63 Newark Mar 25, 9:45PM - CBS
4 <b>Kentucky</b> 71 Tampa Mar 19
11 <b>Marquette</b> 66 Cleveland Mar 20
3 <b>Syracuse</b> 62
7 <b>Washington</b> 83 Newark Mar 25, 7:15PM - CBS
2 <b>N. Carolina</b> 86 Charlotte Mar 20

**EAST**  
NEWARK

1 <b>Duke</b> (30-4) 87 Mar 18
16 <b>Hampton</b> (24-8) 45
8 <b>Michigan</b> (20-13) 75 Mar 18
9 <b>Tennessee</b> (19-14) 45
5 <b>Arizona</b> (27-7) 77 Mar 18
12 <b>Memphis</b> (25-9) 75
4 <b>Texas</b> (27-7) 85 Mar 18
13 <b>Oakland</b> (25-9) 81
6 <b>Cincinnati</b> (25-8) 78 Mar 17
11 <b>Missouri</b> (23-10) 63
3 <b>Connecticut</b> (26-9) 81 Mar 17
14 <b>Bucknell</b> (25-8) 52
7 <b>Temple</b> (25-7) 66 Mar 17
10 <b>Penn St.</b> (19-14) 64
2 <b>San Diego St.</b> (32-2) 68 Mar 17
15 <b>Northern Colo.</b> (21-10) 50

1 <b>Duke</b> 73 Charlotte Mar 20
8 <b>Michigan</b> 71
5 <b>Arizona</b> 70 Anaheim Mar 24, 9:45PM - CBS
4 <b>Texas</b> 69 Tulsa Mar 20
6 <b>Cincinnati</b> 58 Washington D.C. Mar 19
3 <b>Connecticut</b> 69
7 <b>Temple</b> 64 Anaheim Mar 24, 7:15PM - CBS
2 <b>San Diego St.</b> 71 Tucson Mar 19

**WEST**  
ANAHEIM

1 <b>Kansas</b> (32-2) 72 Mar 18
16 <b>Boston U.</b> (21-13) 53
8 <b>UNLV</b> (24-8) 62 Mar 18
9 <b>Illinois</b> (19-13) 73
5 <b>Vanderbilt</b> (23-10) 66 Mar 17
12 <b>Richmond</b> (27-7) 69
4 <b>Louisville</b> (25-9) 61 Mar 17
13 <b>Morehead St.</b> (24-9) 62
6 <b>Georgetown</b> (21-10) 56 Mar 18
11 <b>VCU</b> (23-11) 74
3 <b>Purdue</b> (25-7) 65 Mar 18
14 <b>St. Peter's</b> (20-13) 43
7 <b>Texas A&amp;M</b> (24-8) 50 Mar 18
10 <b>Florida St.</b> (21-10) 57
2 <b>Notre Dame</b> (26-6) 69 Mar 18
15 <b>Akron</b> (23-12) 56

**SOUTHWEST**  
SAN ANTONIO

1 <b>Pittsburgh</b> (27-5) 74 Mar 17
16 <b>UNC Asheville</b> (19-13) 51
8 <b>Butler</b> (23-9) 60 Mar 17
9 <b>Old Dominion</b> (27-6) 58
5 <b>Kansas St.</b> (22-10) 73 Mar 17
12 <b>Utah St.</b> (30-3) 68
4 <b>Wisconsin</b> (23-8) 72 Mar 17
13 <b>Belmont</b> (30-4) 58
6 <b>St. John's (NY)</b> (21-11) 71 Mar 17
11 <b>Gonzaga</b> (24-9) 86
3 <b>BYU</b> (30-4) 74 Mar 17
14 <b>Wofford</b> (21-12) 66
7 <b>UCLA</b> (22-10) 78 Mar 17
10 <b>Michigan St.</b> (19-14) 76
2 <b>Florida</b> (26-7) 79 Mar 17
15 <b>UC Santa Barbara</b> (18-13) 51

**SOUTHEAST**  
NEW ORLEANS



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