



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

5500 CAMPANILE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92182 | (619) 594-5547

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## San Diego State-Fresno State Postgame Quotes

### SDSU head coach Brian Dutcher

#### **Opening statement:**

"You know I told the guys a halftime, this is what a Mountain West game is supposed to feel like: highly competitive, both teams going at each other extremely hard. There was going to be some spurts in the second half, and we had more spurts than they did. When we started the second half, we got on a little roll. We built, I think, a nine point lead. Then they came back, they mixed in a little zone and man on us. They spurred back on us. It was close down the stretch. Both teams played the exact same game plan at the end. Drive the ball to the basket, try to finish the layups for contact, and get to the foul line. They made more plays than we did. They were able to stop us at the rim with some shot blocking. We had a couple layups that we got to the rim, which we couldn't finish. To their credit they got in there and finished some of theirs. When Malik (Pope) got hurt, I decided to go small. That was a by-product of them really starting to run us a bit. I felt we should get more athletic bodies back, so I played Jalen (McDaniels) as the five man down the stretch. He did a pretty good job defending in the low post, but we didn't get enough resistance at the rim against him. We let them get to the rim, and our lack of size may have hurt us there. They continued to attack us with bigger players to the rim and bigger guards. We didn't offer enough resistance down the stretch to prevent them from making timely layups. After the game, I told the team in the locker room, 'I've been doing this a long-long time, and one thing is for certain — no one is going to feel sorry for you, so don't feel sorry for yourself.' That's the beauty of basketball. We don't sit and dwell on a loss for a week like they have to in football. We are playing against New Mexico Saturday. I told them if they are the team I think they are, and they have the grit I know they have. We will be ready to bounce back, go back to work and play at Albuquerque on Saturday and come out of there with a victory. The beauty of basketball."

#### **On tonight's loss:**

"Boise State, we played well and they beat us. I think we know we didn't play well down the stretch in this game. I told them this is particularly on me; I have to put you in a better position to be successful. I stayed with the game plan that worked in the first half. We decided we were going to spread ball screens and go downhill on them. We didn't think they were particularly great guarding dribble drive either. So both teams went downhill on each other a lot. They tried to mix in a few post touches, but we kept it out of there. I don't think we got hurt in the low post a lot. It was two teams driving the ball, which has become college basketball to a large degree. Maybe the defense was better than the offense at times. It's disappointing, like I said. I took a timeout down two and I had a set play we had worked on in practice. We got to the game and we didn't get it executed. I told them that's on me. We didn't get the play we had worked on in practice, it didn't get run correctly. Back to the drawing board on that. It's a fine line — they ask you if you should take a time out, or should you play. Obviously, at that point I wish we had played, because we didn't execute what I called. There is learning to be done. This is college basketball. These are kids that have to play in different positions down the stretch. There are always lessons to be learned from both coaches and players. We will learn them and get better. We will get ourselves back in this race somehow."

#### **On low scoring through shooting game:**

"They played us mostly man. We really worked on, over the last two to three weeks, trying to get a second penetration, to drive the ball and kick it and instead of settling for that three, to drive it again. I think we had some success with that, so that is the team trying to listen to what we are trying to do as a game plan, do the second drive, maybe turn down the three if you're in great rhythm. I don't want them nervous to shoot threes, but it is something we've been working on to try and get to the rim more aggressively. The one thing we did do this game, which we haven't done because we've seen so much zone, is get to the foul line. You shoot 36 free throws, that's a byproduct of attacking the basket. I don't know if we have shot 36 in a game in three games in the conference combined, so when we finally played a team that manned us, I thought we did a really good job of attacking the basket, but like I said down the stretch, the last two to three minutes we didn't get fouled and we didn't get the baskets, so that was the key. Matt Mitchell had a baseline drive, a reverse layup that he missed. Devin Watson got in there, got a shot blocked. Jeremy Hemsley got in there on a ball screen, got downhill, maybe got one stripped or got a tough shot up. We

didn't get in there and finish and they got in there and finished, that was the difference in the game, two teams playing the same way, one team was more successful than the other."

**On free throw shooting game:**

"In a close game, those are huge deals. That's hard work, getting in there and shooting them and then having the confidence to make them. We missed a couple down the stretch that would have been nice to have."

**On Malik Pope's status:**

"They came to me with 40 seconds in the game and said he was available if I needed him, so I thought he had missed so much and wasn't in rhythm to put him in that late, but if we would have happened to push it to overtime, I think he would have been available. I would have used him again, but I just think with the amount of time he missed and the rhythm the game was going in, I didn't want to throw him back in out of rhythm at the end."

**SDSU freshman forward Jalen McDaniels**

**On defensive play:**

"We tried to stay on it on defense and I feel like we have to play better defense so that won't happen, we just have to make better plays to put us in the position to win."

**On the last play:**

"I felt like we were going to score on that play, I think Devin (Watson) got a block shot. They play a good defense. They stopped us. Credit to them."

**On losing Malik Pope:**

"We all just have to step up. He's a big part of our team. We all have to step up and do our part."

**On if he felt pressure playing almost the whole first half:**

"I feel like when I'm on the court, I have to play hard no matter who is on the court or who is off the court. I just have to do what I can do to help our team win and we all have to do the same thing."

**SDSU senior guard Trey Kell**

**On if he thinks this was a lost opportunity:**

"We don't look at it as an opportunity, we look at it as a game we felt like we should've won. We had control of the majority of the game. Credit to them, they didn't stop fighting. They competed until the end and I feel like we let that one slip away, so that is on us."

**On positives from Boise compared to tonight's game:**

"It goes back to what Jalen mentioned earlier, we have to play better on defense. Offensively we did what we could to win the game, but when we hit stops or needed to make a play defensively, we didn't do it, we let them get to the rim or they missed a shot and got a rebound, like I said credit to them but at the same time we need to do a better job as a unit."

**Fresno State head coach Rodney Terry**

**On his team's performance:**

"First off, San Diego State is a great team and Coach Dutcher has done a great job. They have experienced players over there and won a lot of ballgames, especially in this building. We knew it was going to be one of those games where we have to work for 40 minutes to hopefully put ourselves in the position at the end of the game to get a win here."

**On second-half turnaround:**

"I thought we did a much better job of attacking the zone (in the second half). They stole some possessions in zone in the first half and we didn't execute quite as well. I thought we were really good in our execution against the zone, we got the ball in the teeth of the defense, and our guys made some plays. We executed much better in terms of our offensive execution. Defensively, we had to steal a few possessions ourselves and I felt our guys did a nice job of that."

**On playing in Viejas Arena:**

"This is a tough place to play. This is one of the best college basketball environments in the country. You have to come in here and execute on both ends of the floor to give these guys a really good game at home."

**On Nate Grimes' game-saving block:**

"That was huge for us. (Devin) Watson is a tough player going in there and he's a guy who put pressure on us all night going to the basket. Nate (Grimes) made a big play and I think the most impressive part of that play is that he kept the ball inbounds."

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