

# AZTEC BASKETBALL

DEFENDING MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS | FIVE STRAIGHT POSTSEASON APPEARANCES | FIVE CONSECUTIVE 20-WIN SEASONS



## Postgame Quotes

Point Loma Nazarene at San Diego State ▶ Nov. 8, 2010

### San Diego State Head Coach Steve Fisher

#### Opening Statement:

"I thought we played hard and controlled the defensive pace of the game, especially in the first half. We got out of it what we hoped we would. We felt we were the better team. We need to make sure we stay with it when we get a lead. But I'm relatively pleased. Malcolm (Thomas) got every ball that came off the glass, and D.J. (Gay) did a good job running the team. They played like we expect our seniors to play. We played a lot of people and sometimes that can make things a little disjointed. I think that maybe I should not have subbed full scale one time. But all in all, I thought it was a good effort. This will help us prepare for the start of our season at Long Beach State, which will be a really hard game. It was a good way to start the week and get ready for Long Beach State."

#### On returning five starters:

"Experience matters. Now we have to prove that it matters big-time for us. We have a lot of seniors on this team, five. We have a lot of returning veterans. We need to take advantage of that every night out. We need to make sure that in practice, we know what we have to do. That's a big advantage, your practices are better. It's going to help us, without a doubt."

#### On what the team needs to improve on:

"The regular season is here, and our goal is to consistently guard hard. That's our theme. If you guard hard and rebound, you're going to have a good chance. You're going to score points out of conversions. Points will come, we have guys that can score in a variety of ways. Our No. 1 focus is to guard hard and when we do that, we'll get all sorts of transition opportunities. Malcolm (Thomas) is a terrific low-post passer, so he finds people. That makes us very hard to guard. We're a good team, we're better than we were last year at this time. But I said this at this point last year. We beat Point Loma and then went and got smacked bad at Saint Mary's and Pacific. We now have a veteran crew, so we can't let that happen against Long Beach State and Gonzaga. We'll have to find a way to win because those our hard games. We have a really good non-conference schedule to prepare us for conference. All of our blemishes will show."

### San Diego State Senior Guard D.J. Gay

#### On playing the first game:

"It's a great feeling to have our fans back. We feed off their energy. The fans expect a lot from us, and we expect our fans to come show their support as well. But to see people in the stands is a great feeling after playing against each other for the last 3-4 weeks."

#### On Kawhi Leonard:

"He's a monster. The joke on the team is that we call them the "Human Avatar." Just to see the growth from last year to this year, he's put in countless hours in the gym working on his shot. He was knocking down that corner three tonight and that's something he's been working on day in and day out. His work ethic is crazy and it shows on the court. His handling is on point and his jump shot has become much better. He's still a beast on the boards and as a player, I love to have him on my team."

#### On what he learned tonight:

"I just learned that what I saw in practice is what I saw today. The team camaraderie, we all stuck together. The five starters were out and the guys came off the bench with high energy. We all cheered for them, everyone had each other's back. It was nothing but encouragement and positive energy tonight. I think that's the battle for a lot of teams dealing with jealousy and minutes. Our team has none of that, we're all dealing with it great."

#### On how far ahead this year's team is compared to last season:

"We're steps ahead from where we were last season. I don't have to second-guess where my players are going to be because I've been playing with them for a year now. I know where everybody likes to be and what they like to do. As a point guard, that's something you have to know. The year of experience under our belt, winning a championship and playing in the NCAA (Tournament), the next step is winning in it. We've done everything else, so we have to build on top of that."

### San Diego State Senior Forward Malcolm Thomas

#### On playing with a plethora of outside shooters:

"It's a great feeling to know that I can pass out and it's almost a for sure three pointer going in with James Rahon and Mehdi (Cheriet) out on the three-point line. And of course D.J. (Gay) still knocks them down. If I get doubled, I just know I have an outlet out there and it's a good feeling."

### Point Loma Nazarene University Head Coach Ethan Hamilton

#### Opening Statement:

"San Diego State is really good. I think they are really good and we allowed them to look really good. They just have tons of depth and talent at every single position. We were outmanned and there's a lot of little things that we were really exposed on."

#### On seeing Kawhi Leonard play in person:

"I got to see him last year and he's a stud. To me he has improved his perimeter game and he shot the ball well. He's just a high-percentage scorer."

#### On how San Diego State stacks up to the Sea Lions' earlier competition:

"We played USC on Saturday and I think what is evident right away with San Diego State is the depth that they have. They just have a plethora of guys who are playmakers. There were times where I felt like we played well in the halfcourt defensively and they just have guys who can make plays for themselves and for their teammates. Every little thing that you don't do right, they are going to expose you on."