

AZTEC BASKETBALL

FIVE STRAIGHT POSTSEASON APPEARANCES, FIVE CONSECUTIVE 20-WIN SEASONS



2010-11 Preseason Recognition (as of Nov. 7) San Diego State Men's Basketball

PRESEASON NATIONAL RANKINGS

- * No. 21 - ESPN.com's Andy Katz's preseason top 25 (Oct. 16, 2010)
- * No. 22 - CBSSports.com's Gary Parrish's preseason top 25 (Oct. 15, 2010)
- * No. 22 - FOXSports.com (Oct. 13, 2010)
- * No. 22 - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview
- * No. 23 - ESPN.com's Dick Vitale's preseason top 40 (June 17, 2010)
- * No. 24 - ESPN.com's Andy Katz's preseason top 25 (May 11, 2010)
- * No. 25 - Associated Press Preseason Top 25

OTHER PRESEASON RECOGNITION

TEAM

- * 2011 NCAA Tournament participant (No. 7 seed), reaching second round - Athlon Sports College Basketball 2010-11 Preview
- * 2011 NCAA Tournament participant (No. 7 seed) - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball
- * 2011 NCAA Tournament participant (MWC automatic bid) - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview
- * MWC favorite - Preseason MWC Media Poll (Oct. 12, 2010)
- * MWC favorite - Jon Jacques, SLAMonline.com (Oct. 12, 2010)
- * MWC favorite - Jay Drew, The Salt Lake Tribune (Oct. 6, 2010)
- * MWC favorite - Rivals.com
- * MWC favorite - Blue Ribbon
- * MWC favorite - Ryan Greene, Las Vegas Sun (Oct. 6, 2010)
- * MWC favorite - Jeff Eisenberg, The Dagger on Rivals.com from Yahoo! Sports (Oct. 5, 2010)
- * MWC favorite - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview
- * MWC favorite - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball
- * MWC favorite - ESPN.com's Doug Gottlieb (Sept. 3, 2010)
- * MWC runner up - Athlon Sports College Basketball 2010-11 Preview
- * 2011 top contender (one of 23 teams listed) - ESPN.com's Pat Forde (May 12, 2010)
- * 2010-11 team to watch (one of 46) - FoxSports.com's Jeff Goodman (May 11, 2010)
- * No. 5 of 10 in Best of Non-BCS schools list - Gary Parrish, CBSSports.com
- * No. 3 recruiting class in MWC - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball
- * One of nine teams that could open the season in the top 25 or come close to cracking it - Yahoo! Sports' Jason King

KAWHI LEONARD

- * Preseason John R. Wooden Top 50 candidate
- * Preseason fourth-team All-American - ESPN.com's Dick Vitale (July 12, 2010)
- * Honorable mention preseason All-American - Athlon Sports College Basketball 2010-11 Preview
- * "30 other players under consideration" for preseason All-America honors - Gary Parrish, CBSSports.com (Oct. 18, 2010)
- * Preseason MWC player of the year - Jay Drew, The Salt Lake Tribune (Oct. 6, 2010)
- * Preseason all-MWC first team - Preseason MWC Media Poll (Oct. 12, 2010)
- * Preseason all-MWC first team - Jeff Eisenberg, The Dagger on Rivals.com from Yahoo! Sports (Oct. 5, 2010)
- * Preseason all-MWC first team - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview
- * Preseason all-MWC team - Jay Drew, The Salt Lake Tribune (Oct. 6, 2010)
- * Preseason all-MWC team - Ryan Greene, Las Vegas Sun (Oct. 6, 2010)
- * Preseason all-MWC team - Rivals.com
- * Preseason all-MWC team - Blue Ribbon
- * Preseason all-MWC team - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball
- * Preseason all-MWC team - Athlon Sports College Basketball 2010-11 Preview
- * No. 37 on Rivals.com Preseason Top 50 Players of 2010-2011 - Rivals.com from Yahoo! Sports
- * One of nation's top defenders - Fran Fraschilla, ESPN.com (Oct. 12, 2010)
- * "Top NBA prospect" and "Best rebounder" in the MWC - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball
- * "Top NBA prospect" and "Top Rebounder" - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview
- * No. 11 of 25 "Top Power Forwards" - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview
- * No. 5 of 10 "Inside-Out" players - Athlon Sports College Basketball 2010-11 Preview
- * One of 10 "Keep an eye on these guys..." - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview
- * No. 11 wing player in the nation - Gary Parrish, CBSSports.com
- * One of 10 key players around the MWC - ESPN.com's Diamond Leung (Sept. 3, 2010)
- * One of eight sophomores to watch - ESPN.com's Dick Vitale (Aug. 30, 2010)
- * Top player to watch from a non-big six conference in the category "Guys you may not have heard of, but will." - CNN.com's Andy Glockner (May 26, 2010)

MALCOLM THOMAS

- * Preseason all-MWC first team - Preseason MWC Media Poll (Oct. 12, 2010)
- * Preseason all-MWC team - Ryan Greene, Las Vegas Sun (Oct. 6, 2010)
- * Preseason all-MWC team - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball
- * Preseason all-MWC second team - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview

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* Preseason all-MWC team - Rivals.com

BILLY WHITE

- * Preseason all-MWC team - Blue Ribbon
- * Preseason all-MWC second team - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview
- * "Best athlete" in the MWC - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball

D.J. GAY

- * "Best under pressure" in the MWC - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball

JAMES RAHON

- * Impact Transfer - Jeff Goodman, FOXSports.com (Oct. 11, 2010)
- * Preseason Newcomer of the Year - Ryan Greene, Las Vegas Sun (Oct. 6, 2010)
- * One of "25 impact transfers" - Athlon Sports College Basketball 2010-11 Preview

LABRADFORD FRANKLIN

- * One of "10 freshmen we can't wait to see" in the MWC - ESPN.com's Michael LaPlante (Sept. 3, 2010)
- * "Best playmaker/passing" among newcomers - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview

JAMAAL FRANKLIN

- * One of "10 freshmen we can't wait to see" in the MWC - ESPN.com's Michael LaPlante (Sept. 3, 2010)

STEVE FISHER

- * "Best recruiter" in the MWC - Sporting News 2010-11 College Basketball

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

ON SAN DIEGO STATE

* "The Aztecs have quietly gone through the summer with their roster intact, led by one of the more underrated forwards in the country in Kawhi Leonard. Malcolm Thomas is another stud for coach Steve Fisher. ... San Diego State challenged itself with five straight games away from home to open the season, including going to Gonzaga before heading off to three games in Oxford, Ohio, as part of the CBE Classic. If the Aztecs survive that stretch, they'll be in a solid position to enter the MWC season as the favorite, fending off BYU, New Mexico and UNLV." - ESPN.com's Andy Katz (Oct. 15, 2010)

* "Steve Fisher brings back more than 80 percent of his scoring, rebounding and assists from a team that nearly knocked off Tennessee in the first round of the NCAA tournament. Leonard was the Mountain West Freshman of the Year and he will team with Thomas to form one of the best inside duos in the nation. The Aztecs also bring back the starting backcourt of Gay and Tapley - and Fisher also adds Santa Clara transfer James Rahon, who averaged 11.3 points as a freshman and shot 40.7 percent from long distance." - Jeff Goodman, FOXSports.com (Oct. 13, 2010)

* "San Diego State seems to be the consensus pick for conference champion, and it's hard to argue with that because of the studs Steve Fisher has coming back this season. ... San Diego State has a talent who, even though the MWC has proven to be one of the top conferences in the country, belongs on the highest level. ... there's no debating that Kawhi (Leonard) is the most talented player in the conference. Terribly under-recruited out of high school in Riverside, CA, Leonard led the Aztecs to the NCAA Tournament as a freshman while putting up eye-popping numbers (12.7 ppg, 9.9 rpg, 1.9 apg, 1.5 steals). Now, with NBA scouts already drooling about his talent and versatility (if there is such a thing as a five-tool player in basketball, Leonard is it...just don't ask me to name all five of them), Leonard's sophomore season promises to be even more exciting. If he adds a three-point shot to his game, Leonard could become one of the hardest guards in the country, and the Aztecs could be this year's New Mexico and race to a high seed in March." - Jon Jacques, SLAMonline.com

* "All five starters are back, and coach Steve Fisher has also added a three-point shooting threat, Santa Clara transfer James Rahon. Looks like a Sweet 16 team to me, maybe better." - Jay Drew, The Salt Lake Tribune (Oct. 6, 2010)

* "There's really no argument here. All five starters return, including the top front court trio on the West Coast. Heck, the combo of Kawhi Leonard, Malcolm Thomas and Billy White could hang with any other unit in the country, in my opinion. Plus, they have some nice new additions to the roster." - Ryan Greene, Las Vegas Sun (Oct. 6, 2010)

* "So, when was the last time the best team in California wasn't a member of the Pacific-10? The Aztecs return every starter and several key reserves from a 25-9 team that won the MWC tournament and just missed a first-round tourney win over Tennessee. Steve Fisher had the state's best college freshman last season and 6-7 Kawhi Leonard is BYU guard Jimmer Fredette's top competition for MWC Player of the Year." - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview

* "Steve Fisher's Aztecs have won 51 games over the past two seasons, but they're winless (0-6) all-time in the NCAA tournament. This may be the team that changes all of that. Mountain West Conference Freshman of the Year Kawhi Leonard leads a cast of five returning starters that also includes shot-swatting forward Malcolm Thomas. Leonard, Thomas and Billy White should combine to form one of the MWC's top frontcourts. Guards D.J. Gay and Chase Tapley were among San Diego State's most improved players last season." - Yahoo! Sports' Jason King

* "Kawhi Leonard was dominant by the end of his freshman season and he should only improve, and Steve Fisher put together another solid recruiting class. The Aztecs must shoot better and might have some issues at the point, but their overall depth of athleticism and rebounding should win them a league that will be great from No. 1 to No. 4." - Doug Gottlieb, ESPN.com (Sept. 3, 2010)

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* "San Diego State might be this conference's best team. Considering the return of Jimmer Fredette and the talent available to Alford at UNM, that's saying something. Sophomore Kawhi Leonard is one of the best college basketball players you've never heard of, an irrepressible rebounder and top-notch defender who, with just a bit more offensive efficiency, might end up being the best player in the league. San Diego State returns basically everyone from last season's MWC-tournament winning team, including Malcolm Thomas, Billy White and D.J. Gay. The Aztecs had to fight to get into the NCAA tournament last season, but that shouldn't be a problem this time. Once they get there, they'll be looking to do a whole lot more than fight. That shouldn't be a problem, either." - Eamonn Brennan, ESPN.com (Sept. 3, 2010)

* "Steve Fisher has everything in place for the Aztecs to rise to the top of the conference. Super sophomore Kawhi Leonard and the rest of the starting lineup from last season's team are back. Seniors Malcolm Thomas and Billy White have proven to be capable scorers, as has steady point guard D.J. Gay. The Aztecs also will have transfer James Rahon eligible as a 3-point shooting threat. For a team that won last season's MWC tournament and put a scare into Tennessee in the NCAAs, this is a group that could go even further." - Diamond Leung, ESPN.com (Sept. 3, 2010)

* "Steve Fisher has done a great job running the Aztecs. San Diego State should be the team to beat in the competitive Mountain West." - Dick Vitale, ESPN.com (June 17, 2010)

* "... San Diego State returns most of a team that made the NCAAs last season and once again should be a dangerous threat in the Mountain West." - Andy Glockner, CNNSI.com (May 26, 2010)

* "This is another team that had a fine season with a young nucleus that returns intact. The Aztecs won the Mountain West Conference tournament to make the NCAAs and should be even better this time around." - Pat Forde, ESPN.com (May 12, 2010)

* "... I watched San Diego State push Tennessee to the brink in the first round and its talent abounds. Rebounding machine Kawhi Leonard is back for a second go-around, along with Billy White, Malcolm Thomas and D.J. Gay. The entire team is back. ... This is a squad that should be seen more often." - Andy Katz, ESPN.com (May 11, 2010)

ON KAWHI LEONARD

* "Here's your early front-runner for the 2011-12 preseason MWC Player of the Year ... if he's still there and hasn't jumped to the NBA. Leonard is without question the league's top rebounder, both in terms of natural instincts and production. He led SDSU in scoring last year as a byproduct of raw ability. If his mid-range jumper shows more progress this season, it will likely be his last with the Aztecs." - Ryan Greene, Las Vegas Sun (Oct. 6, 2010)

* "Leonard is no longer a secret after the conference's freshman of the year led the league in rebounding and nearly averaged a double-double. The 6-7 forward is a versatile scorer, and developing a more consistent jumper could land him in the NBA draft. Having an experienced supporting cast around him can only help in his continued improvement and the team's NCAA tournament chances." - Diamond Leung, ESPN.com (Sept. 3, 2010)

* "Fans from the West Coast know all about Leonard, but now the nation will learn more about this talented performer, since the Aztecs are one of the favorites in the Mountain West. Coach Steve Fisher is thrilled to have him back in the lineup!" - Dick Vitale, ESPN.com (Aug. 30, 2010)

* "As a freshman, Leonard was a rebounding savant, finishing in the nation's top 60 in rebounding rate at both ends. He just missed a double-double for the season, finishing with 9.9 rebounds per game in just 31 minutes a night...." - Andy Glockner, CNNSI.com (May 26, 2010)

ON JAMES RAHON

* "The Aztecs have a shot to make some noise nationally this season, and Rahon, a San Diego native who averaged 11.3 points as a freshman at Santa Clara and shot 41 percent from beyond the arc, will help." - Jeff Goodman, FOXSports.com (Oct. 11, 2010)

* "No transfer will be more important to his team this year than Rahon. Mark it. Why? Because he fills the Aztecs' most glaring hole from 2009-10, giving them a legitimate 3-point marksman. The San Diego native shot a team-best 40.7 percent from deep at Santa Clara as a freshman in 2008-09, averaging 11.3 points per game. SDSU last season shot just 31.7 percent from long-range as a team. Do the math." - Ryan Greene, Las Vegas Sun (Oct. 6, 2010)

ON LABRADFORD FRANKLIN

* "Franklin is a good-looking scoring point guard who loves the up-tempo game and flourishes in the open floor. He has a smooth jumper out to the 3-point arc. He's been erratic in the past with his decision-making, but has come a long way in learning how to run a team." - Michael LaPlante, ESPN.com (Sept. 3, 2010)

* "There's a good chance that some of the BCS conference programs who recruited San Diego State's LaBradford Franklin will regret passing on him. Though he's on the thin side, Franklin has excellent size, is a clever ball handler and has a very good feel for making those around him better." - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview

ON JAMAAL FRANKLIN

* "Another outstanding open-floor player for the Aztecs, Franklin will impact this team immediately with his high energy level. He is a versatile defender with great lateral quickness and is active on the glass at both ends. He will also generate some excitement with his finishing ability on the break." - Michael LaPlante, ESPN.com (Sept. 3, 2010)

ON STEVE FISHER

* "Fisher doesn't receive enough regional or national credit for the job he has done in San Diego ... but maybe this is the year that changes." - Lindy's Sports College Basketball 2010-2011 Preview