



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### San Diego State vs. Utah State Postgame Quotes

Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif.

January 14, 2017

#### SDSU head coach Steve Fisher

##### **Opening Statement:**

"I don't have to emphasize that it feels good to win. Everybody knows that and that's why you suit up. I really feel good about the way we won tonight. I thought our defense created offense early. If you look at the body of work, I thought it was as well as we played all year combining the two. And if you can throw out the 11-to-nothing run they had, our defense was the best its been against a team that is averaging almost 80 points a game in Mountain West play and that can score the ball in a lot of ways. So I feel good, our players feel good, and now the challenge for all of us is to use this to grow. Have this as our new baseline and get better. Two in a row needs to lead to three in a row. We are winless in true road games. We need to change that on Tuesday and it won't be easy. No game is easy in this league."

##### **On Malik Pope:**

"I know that the addition of Malik Pope makes everybody feel more comfortable. I told him before the game, 'Welcome back. We need you for the long haul now. We need you for the du-ration. Don't try to do things too quickly, too fast. Be basic,' and I thought for the first oppor-tunity since Dec. 22, that he did a pretty good job. So getting him healthy and keeping him healthy will obviously add to what we can do and what they can do. So we need to stay with it."

##### **On Matt Shrigley:**

"I cannot tell you how much he means to this team. Our players know that Matt Shrigley should not have played in minimum of three games that he played in with the ankle that he had. But he said I'm going to play; and, when he came in tonight, he shot the ball knowing that they were going in as opposed to hoping that they were going to go in. And he's become a reliable de-fender so Matt has done a marvelous job of doing his job. And he is unafraid to speak up in that locker room or on the practice floor. And he will call any of our guys out if he doesn't think they are playing that hard. I think he wouldn't be able to do it if he didn't have the respect of everybody out there for how he plays and what he has done out there. Everybody had a piece of it tonight and it felt good."

##### **On sequence in the first half with Pope to Hemsley for a three:**

"I felt good for Malik. So often with great expectations, so many people hang their hat on how many points he scored, and I thought he did a good job of saying, 'I'll just take my time and make what I think is the appropriate play and that ought to be good enough.' Malik has a pretty good basketball IQ knowing how to play; and, let's hope that the Malik sighting that we had tonight will be here from now on. After the game he said he felt pretty good, so we need to keep him headed in that direction. He can pass the ball too. Malik is a very, very good passer and a willing passer. And our players know that."

#### SDSU junior forward Malik Pope

##### **On first game back since injury:**

"It's a good feeling and it feels even better getting the W – that's like the ultimatum. I got a little fatigued towards the end of the game, so I told Fisher I was good for the night in those last five to seven minutes, but other than that I felt great."

**On being patient offensively tonight:**

"I kind of just told myself not to rush things in the beginning of the game. I just got back, so I didn't want to try to force anything offensively and wanted to be the biggest helper defensively. On that play specifically, I just was being patient and saw what was there, and Jeremy (Hemsley) was wide open. I just have to throw a better pass to him next time."

**SDSU senior forward Matt Shrigley****On what spurred the team's offensive runs tonight:**

"Defensive stops, pushing the ball in transition and getting each other shots - that's a big part of how this team knocks down shots."

**On having Malik Pope back on the floor:**

"When Malik's back, we post him up. He can rebound the ball and push the ball in transition, so having him out there is huge plus for us. When he plays at the pace like he did tonight and does his moves and knows what to do, it's great."

**On the team playing well together:**

"When we shoot like we shot tonight, it's easy to say that. We're still going to go through our ups and downs where games are going to be decided in the last couple minutes, but it's good to get a game like this under our belt and go home feeling good about ourselves."

**On play where he shot the 3-ball after passing it to Max Hoetzel:**

"I thought Max was going to jump off a trampoline and dunk it, but Utah State had good hustle and their man got back and was able to deflect the ball, which happened to bounce right back to me. I think (Utah State freshman guard) Sam (Merrill) jammed his finger and I noticed that he wasn't closing out, so I took a shot back and shot it."

**On trying to get the first road win of the season next week:**

"Winning road games in this conference, especially when you start off 0-3, is a huge part of the season for us. It's up to us to come into tomorrow refocused, buckled down on what we need to do and execute our game plan."

**On what caused the sudden change from the losing streak to winning streak:**

"Losing was a big part of that. Watching the film, seeing the mistakes we're making, seeing how close these games are and the little things at the end that we do wrong that lose it for us. Coach Fisher always says that so many of these games will come down to the last five minutes, so it's up to us to play a full 40 minutes, take care of the ball, and do everything we can to win."

**Utah State head coach Tim Duryea****Opening Statement:**

"At the start of the game we were playing good defensively, we had pretty good rhythm. We were passing and catching the ball well. We were not active enough with our hands or with our minds. It is one thing to be in the right spot but we were not making any plays. We just let them get off to a great rhythm defensively and we hung in there but we gave up to many points."

**On Utah 14-0 run:**

"I was very happy. We played some man and some zone which I thought was good. The second part of the first half was pretty good. We got a rhythm of what they were doing but we did not finish the first half as we needed to."

**On turnovers:**

"Majority of their points tonight came over transitions and turnovers. It was way too many turnovers. Just live ball turnovers make it hard to defend. We were making plays but had a loose ball and lost it. It is frustrating but again, we have to be in a competitive mentality for a full forty minutes. You cannot wait until your behind to develop the urgency you need to compete defensively."

**On Jalen Moore:**

"He had a minor spring on his thumb in the first half. He got tape on his hand but that is never good for a basketball player. He struggled a bit with turnovers."

**- SDSU -**