



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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San Diego State-San Diego Christian Postgame Quotes

SDSU Head Coach Steve Fisher

Opening Statement:

"I told them at halftime that it reminded me of my third hour gym class when I was teaching at Rich East High School on kickball and one young freshman said, 'Coach, this is forced fun.' I said, 'It looks like it is forced fun.' I think you are feeling sorry for yourself about the whooping we took on Monday and you can't do that. And I thought the second-half we played with – we were far from perfect. But I liked our pop in our step and we played with a little more 'I'm really glad to be here,' rather than, 'I have to be here.' So then that was probably one of the nice things I saw. And Jeremy Hemsley was the best of the bunch and from that standpoint - and I'm not just talking about points he made – I thought Jeremy had a better bounce in his step and he pushed the ball even when he was a little tired. I liked that. One other thing that we talked about before the game was that we had 12 assists in two games. Let's see if we can get half of our baskets assisted. And we had 32 baskets and 18 assists. So that felt good where we were driving at times for others and throwing the ball to somebody else rather than driving into traffic and trying to get it on our own. Some little nuggets we will take as we move forward now to important game, big test in Sacramento against Cal."

On the team's injuries:

"We had two 13-year-olds as honorary coaches today and at half-time I said, 'John, Jake do you have tennis shoes?' and he looked at me. I said, 'Where do you go to school?' 'La Jolla Country Day (School)' 'What grade are you in?' 'Seventh grade.' I'm putting one of you in. I mean that! I'm putting one of you in and they looked at me and I said to them after the game, 'I looked in the rulebook and I would've jeopardized your eligibility if I put you in. But I wanted to put you in.' That's what I was thinking. Who's going to go in? Who's going to go in. Yeah, but we made it through."

On the status of Matt Shrigley, Valentine Izundu, and Malik Pope:

"Matt Shrigley is anything you want. 'You want me to play, coach?' and his ankle's swelled up on him. I said, 'Yes, but no. You're not playing.' And Val's ankle is swelled up on him also. I think if it would've been Cal, they would've tried to play. I don't know how effective they would've been, but we said we better take them and say 'You're not playing and don't even get dressed so we can be tempted to put you in.' But hopefully both of them will be ready to go on Monday. Malik's making progress, but I would term myself 'cautiously optimistic' today that he would have a chance. But he hasn't done anything since he pulled himself from that warm-up before the second exhibition game, but he's making progress. But I'm not sure what that will mean. I'm hopeful that it could happen, but that's me."

On if he is happy with where the team is at:

"Am I happy where we're at? You know, I like our – I really like our team. They care, they want to get better and we will get better. So I like the makeup. We need to get more hands on deck; more guys ready to play and that will make everybody a little better. But I enjoy being with them. They practice hard, they want to get better, they want to win, they want to play for their teammates. So it's a good group."

On D'Erryl Williams's performance tonight:

"D'Erryl, I said that before, he has been somewhat the odd man out in his career here. Terrific young guy. Said it before. Pre-med student. He is majoring in kinesiology with a desire and a focus to go to med school. And he will. So it's nice to see him get some minutes and he cares. He cares. He sometimes worries too much about a negative play that he has rather than moving into the next play, but we can help him with that. Great kid."

On if he chose to play Cal for the team's three Sacramento players (D'Erryl Williams, Dakarai Allen and Malik Pope):

"The fact that we're taking three kids back to Sacramento is good. And we said yeah, that would really, really be good. We're playing in a brand new Sacramento Kings arena. Everyone will be excited about that and D'Erryl and Dakarai and Malik will be going home to play. Yeah, we're really excited. We saw that we were going there and we said yeah, that's going to be great."

On the San Diego Christian bus accident:

"What happened to them was something that you hope would never happen to A) a team and B) a school bus full of young people. I guess [it was] rammed and catches fire and the whole bus goes and we talked about guys losing, just get off the bus and left most of the things on there from computers to backpacks to everything. So that had to be terribly scary for everyone and the driver of the car lost his life so fortunately they were all OK. But I'm sure for them it is a moment they will never forget and one that shook them pretty good. Glad they're OK."

On deciding if he should red-shirt Jalen McDaniels:

"I haven't decided anything yet. We did play him today, but we haven't made any final decisions on any of that."

SDSU Sophomore Guard Jeremy Hemsley

On if this game helped them bounce back after their Monday night contest against Gonzaga:

"It was a good game to get the bad taste out of our mouth, but we still remember what happened. That game isn't something that we can hang our heads on - it happened. We have to move on from it and learn from it in order to get better."

On the benefit of facing against a smaller lineup:

"It helped, but even with 7-footers in the paint, driving, kicking, penetrating, and getting the ball out to the open guys is still something that we have to do regardless of who we are playing or how tall they are."

On his confidence in his jump shot after finally being back and healthy:

"My jumper is something I have put a lot of work into. When I came to college, that wasn't something I was known for. I was known as a driver, so that's something that I have put a lot of work into. Shooting the ball is something I feel 100 percent comfortable with. When I had the injury last year, it was hard to shoot, dribble, or do anything because I didn't have that extra push. Now that I'm healthy, I feel good with everything."

On what he specifically changed about his shot:

"There's always tweaks that you make to your shot, but when it comes down to it, it's a lot of repetition. When you put repetition into your jump shot, there is not much else to put into it. You go game speed and repeat whatever shots you feel like you're going to get in a game - that's what I did. I worked on the shots I know I get the most in a game and I guess it's working."

On if he altered his motion:

"I actually did change it. I tried to get it into one motion because last year it was more of a hitch. It wasn't natural, so this year I tried to make it flow."

On their disappointment that San Diego Christian didn't allow them to fully showcase their offensive talents:

"I was hoping that the teams that saw Monday's game against Gonzaga would play us with a zone defense. The zone that they had was good, but zone offense is something we work on. Although everything is a work in progress and it's something we are getting better at, we feel comfortable having a zone offense or having another team go against us as a zone. I did expect them to go zone against us, but they didn't. I guess they felt they could guard us man-to-man. I do, in the future however, expect teams to play us as a zone."

SDSU Senior Guard Dakarai Allen

On limited amount of healthy players:

"I just wanted to go out there and stay positive. We had a little bit of game slippage that we are going to work on, but we finished strong and that is going to be what we take away from this game."

On his injury during the game:

"I don't like sitting out, honestly. Every time I get hurt I try to get back in. Every time I tell Coach (Fisher) I'm good, no matter how much I'm hurting. I just want to play. I was on the backside and the guy ran up my leg, and I twisted my ankle. When I went off it, it hurt a lot. As time went on it got better, so I told coach I was ready."

On the amount of team injuries:

"I don't know, maybe we just have a dark cloud over our heads. We got Sergio (Ibarra), he is a solid (athletic) trainer, and hopefully they get all the injured players back."

On becoming more comfortable switching defenses:

"Today was easier, because we were switching every single ball screen. Sometimes when we play teams we don't switch the 5, so you don't know who is coming, and that's what makes it harder. Today, we were switching every single ball screen, so as soon as we saw the ball screen we knew we were switching."

On Monday's game:

"We couldn't wait to get back on the floor as a team. We watched tape for an hour and 30 minutes on the Gonzaga game. We learned from the mistakes and couldn't wait to get back out there and show what we learned from our last game. We were ready to play. We came out and had fun the second half, and I think that was the biggest difference between the first and second half."

San Diego Christian Head Coach Edgar Mendez**On SDSU's play:**

"They are just so long defensively. That's their strength. They're really good disrupting you and taking you out of your offense. As you saw, we were running our offense for the whole 30 seconds, sometimes getting some shot clock violations. That was the toughest part."

On SDSU sophomore guard Jeremy Hemsley's play:

"[Sophomore guard Jeremy Hemsley] is phenomenal. We tried to box him in in transition, and even with us thinking about him he still was able to get into the hole plenty of times. He did a great job."

On San Diego Christian's play:

"I was proud. We had our moments. At one point we were down 20-17 in the first half. I thought we built a little momentum there. Unfortunately, they ramped up the defense, and we had some turnovers where they were able to jump up to a 14-point lead at the half, and that's the last thing you want. We've talked a lot about SDSU's first five minutes and last five minutes. They're so good at those times and we had to try to keep that momentum away, but they figured it out in the last five minutes of the first half."

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