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Fresno State at San Diego State Postgame Quotes Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif. Jan. 1, 2020

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"The crowd was incredible and when we got on a roll the crowd helped us with their energy. We have the best fans on the West Coast, and I said on the radio that it's Arizona, Gonzaga and San Diego State that have the best atmosphere. It was a great atmosphere in the arena today and we are very thankful that the fans came out on New Year's Day for an early game and supported their Aztecs.

On Nathan Mensah's status:

"Obviously, Nathan didn't play today. He has a respiratory issue that we are having him see a specialist for and when that happens, we can update things with him."

On the play of Joel Mensah:

"I thought in Nathan's absence, Joel stepped up. I've boasted about our bench all year and when they had the opportunity to play, like Joel he goes 4-for-4 from the field, was in the right place and made some really good plays. I think Joel saw an opportunity this week and made the most of that opportunity. It's hard to come off the bench and play for a couple of minutes and be great, but that is the situation he has been in. As long as Nathan is out, he will continue to get more minutes and continue to get more comfortable. From last year to this year we have seen great growth from Joel, so it's not a surprise he played well."

On the play of Matt Mitchell:

"We rode one play for Matt all day. He drove it in all day and got to the line, made free throws and hit a three. When he didn't have anything, he dropped it into Yann (Wetzell).

On if the increase in minutes will be sustainable for guards Malachi Flynn and KJ Feagin:

"It will depend on who we are playing. Fresno State presses a lot and you would say 'no big deal the press didn't affect us at all', well that is because I kept my (ball) handling guards in their all game. I don't think we turned the ball over once against the press. Our guards were under control against every trap. They moved it, knew where they were looking, and we had great veteran guard play. That is why they played all the minutes they did."

On the defensive effort in the first half:

"We set a game plan. Our guys are smart, and they followed the game plan. Both team teams were minus good players. Nate Grimes is one of the best players in this league. Neither team had their center today, but that's basketball. I thought Matt (Mitchell) did a good job on (Orlando) Robinson early in the game. We have some versatility in what we do, but I don't want to go small all the time. We didn't do that today because the nature of the game, but we won't be afraid to go big with Yann and Joel or Yann and Nolan, when the situation is right."

San Diego State Junior Forward Matt Mitchell

On starting for the first time this season:

"I just knew that I had to come out and play my game. Stay aggressive and keep that mindset that that I can do everything on the floor and always be ready for my team. I just had the next man up mentality and just was ready to go."

On how he took advantage of Fresno State's defense setting up for him:

"It was a little zag play and you know, we just were able to take advantage of it just off the bounce. I saw a lane open up and then we had a couple post touches and the guards were able to get in there. They (SDSU's guards) are off of the screen and get the looks that they wanted to so I feel like we were able to just pinpoint that play and use that use that as our stepping stone."

On if he prepares before making big plays or if they come instinctually:

"It really just occurs over the course of the game. I work on a lot of sets and counter moves and just always am trying to kind of work around (the defender). (I work on) Finishing and getting around bigger players and smaller players, no matter what it is. So, it (his spin move) was just instinctual and it just happened to go in."

On the challenge of playing Fresno State:

"They're a very physical team and they never go away. They always stay (in the game). They fight no matter how much they're down. They're always fighting and I love that about their program. And so today it was what it was and they kept fighting and kept fighting and they push it back close. We just had to stick to our game and stick to our game plan and the way we know how to play."

San Diego State Junior Guard Malachi Flynn

On both teams playing without their bigs:

"It changed it (the game) a lot. We did not know Nate Grimes was not going to play until today, but it was just two big men that both rebound hard not in the game, so it changed the complexion of the game a lot."

On achieving 1,000 career points:

"It's crazy. I was not really aware of it until they made the announcement in game, but it is really cool. I've seen guys reach a thousand points and it's cool to finally reach that."

On offensive changes the team made after first half:

"I don't think we made too many adjustments, I just think we missed some shots (in the first half). We tried to just get the ball movement and stuck with it in the second half. Matt (Mitchell) gave us a boost, a couple buckets and was getting to the line a lot. Getting easy points like that definitely helped us in the second half."

Fresno State Head Coach Justin Hutson

Overall thoughts:

"It hurt us when Orlando (Robinson) got in foul trouble. That really hurt us. (He had) 27 (points) the game before, 25 (points) the game before (that), and being short-handed with Nate Grimes out, we couldn't afford for Orlando to sit out. But we were able to keep it close in the first half, and I knew how smart that (San Diego State) staff is that they would go at him (Orlando Robinson). So, I left him out in the first half and we kept it close."

On SDSU this year vs. last year:

"They (SDSU) were good both years. This is the first time I saw them up close. Hard to judge. They've got Nathan (Mensah) out. He protects that rim. I just know they're a good team, great program, great people.

On SDSU's transfers:

"They got old quick. In this business, there's a saying, 'Never be young.' That's a goal. And they got old quick."