



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

5500 CAMPANILE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92182 | (619) 594-5547

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SDSU Men's Basketball Preview Quotes – at Fresno State January 17, 2019

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"We're back on the practice floor today. We gave them yesterday off, rest their legs a little bit. Mentally, get a little rest from us, and we'll be back to work today and try to see if we can improve in a number of areas, obviously starting with our defense and our rebounding, but try to get a little bit more rhythm and flow to what we're doing offensively. I feel we know as if what some of our players' strengths are as this year progresses; put them in better positions to be successful. Like I said, every coach in the country is going through a checklist as to what we're doing well offensively, what strengths we have that we have to play more to, and I think we're slowly making steps in that direction. Obviously, our zone offense, I'm extremely pleased with, and we'll spend the next three or four days trying to get our man offense in a little bit of a better rhythm."

On the differences in Nathan Mensah's role between zone and man coverage:

"For the zone, Nathan is usually just high post, low post, you know, pinning a body. But then when you play man offense and he runs out to ball screen, if they jump out and hedge early, then he's supposed to slip early. If the guard jumps on the high side and sends it to the baseline, then he's supposed to slide into a window. If they drag it, then he's supposed to roll hard to the rim. With zone offense, there's less to think about; you're playing high-low post and you're posting a body, whereas man offense, a lot of what the defense does dictates what reads you make. As he gets more experienced, he'll make those reads quicker and more efficiently."

On emotions of facing Justin Hutson for the first time:

"I don't think there are really any emotions involved in it. The thing we have to realize with Fresno is they beat us four straight until last year's conference tournament, twice in here. Rodney Terry has obviously left Justin a very good team and Justin's done a great job taking over that program, but they have two fifth-year senior guards, they have a senior in [Fresno State senior forward Sam] Bittner, they have two other juniors in the lineup, one fourth-year junior, and it's a very experience, very talented team and they will present great challenges. From an emotional standpoint, I think our guys are so much more focused on waiting for us to tell them what we have to do to be successful against Fresno. Today won't be about Fresno. It will be about us. This practice will be about the Aztecs, and cleaning up things we need to clean up. As we get closer to the game [in this] bye week, maybe by Sunday and Monday it will turn more to a Fresno focus. At that point, we'll have a chance to watch their Boise game and glean a little bit more information."

On the differences in a Rodney Terry-coached Fresno State team, and a Justin Hutson-coached Fresno State team:

"They both play hard. Obviously, Rodney did a good job and won 20-something games again last year. Justin maybe presses a little bit more than Rodney did. Both of them were mainly man-to-man defensive teams, very little zone. Offensively, Rodney might have run a little bit more of a patterned offense, a circle-motion-type thing and create driving angles, where Justin — because he's playing so many guards — runs a lot like the things we run here, a lot of spread ball screens, lot of attacks, rolling post with [Fresno State junior forward Nate] Grimes, you know, spread the floor and attack off the bounce. If you draw two defenders, try to find the rolling post. Lot of the same things we did here."

Senior Guard Jeremy Hemsley

On how the bye week will help the team improve:

"Defense will probably be the emphasis in the bye week like this. Having time off like this just gives us the chance to get better. Watch a lot of film and see what we can do to get better, [see] the mistakes that we made in past games or past practices. A week like this is definitely helpful for all of us."

On emotions of facing Justin Hutson for the first time:

"Fresno is a good team. No matter who the coach is, it's a game that we have to win. We have to go in with the same mindset, so I don't think we could really, as players who played with or for Hut, we can't really get into that battle or whatever you want to call it because the focus is just their team, and they're a good team. We just want to beat them, same as it would be if they had a different coach."

Sophomore Forward Matt Mitchell

On emotions of facing Justin Hutson for the first time:

"I think it will be fun. Get a chance to go against a former coach and a former member of this program. I think it will be fun. All things aside, it's also a business trip."

On the differences in Nathan Mensah's role between zone and man coverage:

"It's definitely going to be different for him, but at the same time, it's a blessing to be on the court with him because he's active. He's all over the place. I said it before, but it seems like every time somebody drives when he's in the game, he's meeting them at the rim. I think that as long as he's focused and we help get him there and he's on the right track, he'll be okay."

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