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UC San Diego at San Diego State Postgame Quotes Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif. October 30, 2019

San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

"Another season is underway and it felt good to be out there. A lot of guys in their first minutes at Viejas; three new starters, all first-time Aztecs, all first-game action. Two of them seniors, one of them a fourth-year junior. I thought they did a great job. I wish I could've gotten KJ (Feagin) and Malachi (Flynn) in a little offensive rhythm, but despite that, Malachi led us in rebounds and assists, so he played a magnificent game. I want to see a few of those guys get more shots up and in, but we still shot a great percentage. I'm talking about offense now, but I told them (the team) before the game our season is going to be based on how we defend and how we rebound. In our game against Point Loma, they shot 31 or 32 percent against us then tonight UCSD shot 28 percent from the field, so that's pretty good defensive effort. That's making teams shoot low percentages. I don't want to give up as many offensive rebounds as we did, but they (UCSD) shot so many threes that had so many long rebounds. They outran us to a couple of them, but I thought for our first performance in front of a crowd – I liked what I saw from my team. They shared the ball and the bench scored a ton of points - the ball moved freely. There's room to improve, which you would expect to see after your first exhibition game, but I like the disposition and the attitude of this team and that will go a long way to helping us be the team that we want to become as the season goes on."

On Malachi (Flynn) and his offensive rhythm:

"In the past, I talked specifically about Jaylen McDaniels when he was in his second year and was a go-to player, it was harder (to get a rhythm) because they ran a second defender at him. He had to learn how to become a better playmaker and passer and get other people involved. Malachi already has that felt. They pay attention to him and he ended up with seven assists. Our best players over the years Aztec-wise are guys that can not only make a basket from themselves, which he can, but when they draw multiple defenders and can find the open man, which he can too. I was really encouraged by Malachi's playmaking ability. I'm not concerned about his shot at all. You'll have games where he'll be on fire and he won't miss very many."

On KJ and Yanni's leadership:

"They were vocal. The more they're willing to do, they happier I'm going to be. They say in basketball, 'A player-led team is better than a coach-led team,' so I think we're heading in that direction and we're going to have a player-led team."

On Keshad Johnson's shot tonight:

"He shot as a freshman. A lot of times you look up and he's in the wrong place offensively and defensively but he found a way to score 12 points. His learning curve is going to be shorter than the rest of the guys because he's new to it, but he's a quick study. He wants to please the coaches. Sometimes I wish he'd do more. I wish he'd attack the basket off the dribble, but he moves the ball unselfishly and when he finds his rhythm within what we're doing, he'll continue to get better every game."

On tonight's defense and overall performance:

"I thought we did a good job defensively. We switched ball screens and we were able to keep a body in front of an opponent's body. The only thing we got hurt on when we switched our post players, we'd lose track of the shooters as they move the ball around, but we got better as the game went on. They were missing their starting point guard, so we picked up full-court pressure and we didn't trap a lot, but when we did, we created steals and havoc. I thought we wore down their guards as the game went on. Missing their point guard is always a huge factor for them. If it were a regular season game, they would find a way to get him out there, but not in an exhibition game. We didn't play them at full strength but I was pleased at the way my team played."

On senior forward Yann Wetzell's athleticism:

"Yanni's good. He's good around the basket, he can score in the low post, he's got multiple moves. He missed a couple chippies in there, he still ended up four for eight or something like that. He got his hands on a lot of basketballs-- Yanni's versatile. It's like Pulliam, I have to find ways to put them all in the best position to be successful, and when they draw a second defender to move that ball and find the open man, they can be. But this (tonight's performance) is about what I thought we'd get out of Yanni. He has the ability to step back and make a three-point shot if open, so he can stretch it a little bit. He's getting comfortable too, it's a new system, new teammates, so I was pleased with how he played but there's room for growth."

On junior forward Matt Mitchell coming off the bench:

"Matt missed seven weeks post-arthroscopic knee surgery to heal an up a meniscus. So now, he is going full practice but you can see his game legs aren't back yet. He just has to get himself into a little better game conditioning, just so he can play in longer stretches. But once Matt gets back to full strength, I think we're going to be a better basketball team."

On Joel's Technical:

"I don't know what to say, just that I think we are always going to do things the right way. Whether it's offense, defense, we're not going to get that kind of technical. I was upset with Joel because all I want to see in the game is what I've seen in practice, and he never does that in practice. As soon as he did it he looked at me and knew he shouldn't of done it. He had to come out, he looked at me, and lesson learned-- I don't think we'll see it again this year. Maybe it brought [the team] to attention, because we can't make these mistakes mental or physical. The intention of pulling him out wasn't to have an effect on the rest of the team, it was to have an effect on him so I don't have to see the same thing in the future. Joel played a good game today."

On the team's readiness for a regular season game:

"They better be. Texas Southern will be interesting, they've got a bunch of transfers that we haven't seen and we'll have to try to find a way to learn as much about them as we can in a short period of time. Johnny Jones does a great job, and they'll have a bunch of division one transfers that have come from a number of high major programs that he'll be fitting together. Obviously, they'll be talented, and we'll have to figure out which ones we have to stop, maybe somewhat on the fly."

On the help of scouting reports:

"It helped a lot, scouting always helps. We always do a good job scouting but we made the decision to switch the five-man ball screens because (Chris) Hansen is very good at ball screening and popping out and shooting threes, so by switching we're limiting his three-point shots. Once we do that, then they try to roll him in the post and we did a good job fronting and doubling when it went in there. The scouting report helped us, we knew what each player could do we knew who were the shooters who were the drivers and our kids pay attention. They're (the players) quick studies, they learn and they want to be taught."

San Diego State Junior Forward Matt Mitchell

Thoughts on the game:

"We were able to pull out the win but it was bigger than that. We were trying to get better today on both sides of the ball, especially defensively. That's what we're trying to make our staple this year. We're trying to be offensive but a defensive team as well. We're playing both sides of the ball well."

On coming off the bench:

"You never really know, whatever the lineup is that's what it is. That's the way it is so I'm going to go out there and play my game. I feel like no matter what the lineup is they'll go out there and get the job done, whether or not I'm in the starting lineup."

On turnovers against Point Loma:

"That's definitely a wake-up call. 19 turnovers in a scrimmage is too much, 19 turnovers in anything is too much. We had 13 today, and I feel like that can still be better. Our guards, our forwards, our bigs can all take care of the ball just as well as the guards can so I feel like that 13 is still a little too high."

On new players and game environment:

"It's definitely big, being able to play another team instead of playing each other. Everyday in practice is good but also to be able to get out there and get acclimated with each other against another team. We have a good feel for each other already and it's only going to get better as we go on."

San Diego State Junior Guard Malachi Flynn

On rebounding performance:

"Some of those just fell in my lap. That's not going to happen every night but that's been our focus in practice, trying to get rebounds. I was just trying to get out there and help the team."

On first game with team:

"It felt good getting back into the game flow. You can't imitate that as much as you want to in practice. Getting out here it definitely feels good to get that feel back."

On first game played in years:

"I'm not too worried about it, my teammates are helping me too. It's going to be a team thing, I'm just going to try to get mine and not force too much and try to get wins."

On any nerves in first game:

"I wouldn't say nerves but definitely just different. It's been almost two years to be honest with the offseason and the whole year off so it's a little different but I think I'll get back into it quickly."

On if any rust affected him:

"You could say that. I don't want to put it on one thing. It happened, I missed shots, it happens to everybody. I'll just keep moving forward."

On freshman forward Keshad Johnson's performance:

"That's what he does. He has a hot motor, he's always running up and down doing different things, rebounding. He's our longest player on the team and that's just a little of what he does."

On the lack of scouting before scrimmage:

"It makes a difference, just knowing their guys. We know what everybody does so we can guard to their tendencies and just pick up on things, that happens when you scout. You're just more familiar with your opponent."

UC San Diego State Head Coach Eric Olen

On tonight's performance:

"I didn't think it was our best, but San Diego State had a lot to do with that. They played really well, played with a lot of energy right from the start. We struggled in a lot of ways, some foul trouble early, some miscommunications, lack of execution, but San Diego State had a lot to do with that. It wasn't our best but it's an opportunity to get better for us and we'll try and look at the film and learn."

On playing on the road against a D1 crosstown opponent:

"It's a terrific environment in terms of getting better, [SDSU] is as talented a team we'll see this season. Playing SDSU was not just good for things that we want to work on, but we'll also try and look at some of the things we did well. We had some good possessions, possessions where the ball moved and we got it to where we wanted it to. That's what we got to make sure we build on and take the things that we didn't do well and try and correct them."

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