



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### **San Diego State News Conference Quotes**

**Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2019**

**Fowler Athletics Center**

#### **Head coach Brian Dutcher**

"Good afternoon. It seems like we've been off for a month and it's only been a week. So, we were playing pretty good basketball and now we've had a week off.

"We're in a stretch where we play Wednesday, Friday, Monday, Thursday and Friday. It's a player's dream - short practices and a lot of games. So, we'll see how we respond, and I know our guys are excited to get back on the floor. It will be a great environment tomorrow night and we'll see if we can take a step forward."

#### **On what was learned at BYU:**

"BYU was a great win because it was on the road in a hostile environment and we found a way to hang in there after we gave up a lead. They went on a huge run and you don't know how the guys will react until you get there. You practice but nothing emulates being on the road in that environment and seeing if you can make important plays with the game on the line and we made important plays with game online. It's definitely great to see from a coaching standpoint."

#### **On the meaning of the game at USD:**

"It's a crosstown game and emotions are high, but I wouldn't go as far as to say it's a rivalry game. Utah State's a rivalry; UNLV is a rivalry. Those are conference games that were going to have to win to win a title. New Mexico, Boise State. Those are the ones that mean the most to us."

#### **On what he has seen of USD:**

"You know with a with a week off, I've had a chance to watch every game they play and obviously they were more dangerous last year because with their experience. They could have guys play multiple positions. Sam has done a good job of running what he runs, but he can't slide a guard to the high post right now and run the same offense as they did last year when they could play multiple positions."

#### **On how the transfer players have blended into the team:**

"Basketball is basketball. At some level they've played a lot of college basketball, so they're used to playing in space. They used to play in off all screens. The key to it is playing with each other, playing to each other's strengths and be able to sacrifice part of your game for the team. If you look at our last game, they're playing together, and I told him I'm not going to obsess about the offense right now. I'm trying to set a tone where we're defending and rebounding because that will set the tone for our entire season. There are going to be nights when shots aren't falling even though we have a talented offensive team. So

we have to be able to rely on our defensive and rebounding. It's easy to roll out of my mouth, but it's whether I can get the team to buy into that mindset. We will find out as we play all these games if we're continuing to improve defensively.

"I think it's harder to get them to play defense when they're so good offensively when they're scoring points at a high rate. They just believe they're going to score enough points to win. So, I have to make sure that their mindset is it's not going to be that way all the time. We're going to run into struggles and with the ball not going in and we have to have something to hang our hats on and that's going to be our defense and our rebounding. We've outrebounded every opponent so far. Our opponent shooting percentage is down and our ranking in that category is way higher than it was a year ago at this time. So I think we're making steps in that direction, but I want to see it all the time. I want to see a defensive mindset. So hopefully we are trending in that direction."

**On if having a week off was the plan:**

"I think we'd all like a game this week, but we couldn't find the right opponent at the right time to come in here. So now we have a lot of games and in a short period of time and we're going to have to see how good we are mentally because physically we can't be on the floor for two and a half hours getting ready for an opponent. We have to walk through for an hour and a half hour and say this is the game plan and then ask them if they can follow it. Because at some point coaches could cost the team by wearing them out. If you practice three hours and you go play the next day, you have no legs. So this team has to now show that they can watch film and on a short prep get ready for a game."

**On if the series with USD will continue:**

"We're in the process of trying to make that decision. We're waiting to see if our conference goes to 20 games. That won't be determined for some point in the future and if that happens it cuts into non-conference games. So, we're trying to decide if we want to play UCSD because I don't, we want to play USD and UCSD in the same year. UCSD is making the move to Division I and we have big games in here that the fans want to see. We have to continue to try to get Power-5 schools to come in here and play a home-and-home. If we could get a home and home with USC as opposed to USD, I think the fans would say play USC. So, there's a lot that goes into it and it's never perfect but we're out there making the phone calls and trying to piece together a schedule. Sometimes it takes time to make that decision and we're going through our due diligence on that."

**Matt Mitchell junior forward**

**On what the BYU win meant to the team emotionally:**

"I think it did a lot for our team chemistry just being able to go and get one on the road in a tough environment. So I feel like that definitely added onto it and it will bring us closer together as we move on."

**On how badly you want to get a win at USD after losing to them at home last year:**

"I think any loss at home stings, and especially at home, is tough because you are supposed to protect home court. But we have to move past that. It's a new year, new season and we're looking to go in there on the road and come away with a win."

**On if this is a rivalry game:**

"I wouldn't say it's a rivalry. Our rivals are within the Mountain West. I do think this is an important game because it is on the road and they will have a great environment tomorrow night, but I don't see it as a rivalry game. That's just a good game."

**On what it is like to have so many new players from different programs on the team:**

"I never feel like it's new. Basketball is still basketball, but we've been implementing a lot of new things offensively and defensively so you definitely have to learn along the way but at the end of the day basketball is basketball."

**On the difference between last year's and this year's USD team:**

"They have guards that they can get downhill well in transition. They also have a guard that shoots the ball outside from deep well, and he's playing well, so as long as we can contain those guys, I feel like we'll give ourselves a shot.

**On how he feels physically after losing weight in the offseason:**

"I feel like I'm getting back to the old me the me. Like I was when I first came into college and even before I came to college, my senior in high school. I'm just trying to get back to that person that I was and excel and be better than that person and not backtrack. I've bought in and I'm here and for the better."

**Jordan Schakel, junior guard**

**On what the BYU win meant to the team emotionally:**

"I agree with what Matt said. Just being able to win in that environment, in the second game of the year and a tough road test like that, you know, we found out who we are at this early time of the year."

**On how badly you want to get a win at USD after losing to them at home last year:**

"We definitely want to go in there and get a win. It'll be a tough environment tomorrow and we're looking forward to it."

**On the difference between last year's and this year's USD team:**

"I think it's a little bit different just because last year's team had the four veterans. The system is the same and we've just got to get used to the system again, but just know that the players are different. We have to know our personnel for this game.