



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### San Diego State-Fresno State Postgame Quotes March 6, 2019

#### San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

##### **Opening Statement:**

"First of all, I want to thank this young guy next to me [Jeremy Hemsley] for four fantastic years of Aztec basketball. He's played his heart out and he's done everything I've ever asked of him. All he's ever wanted to do was win for this university and I'm grateful that he's been a part of this program for four years. I couldn't be any happier to have a young man like this represent this university and our basketball program. On to the game. We were bitterly disappointed in the outcome of a very good college basketball game. Looking back, I didn't find a way to get a time out call to stop some of that momentum. I tried to explain to the guys, if I want one, I have to take it immediately when they see me because once the ball is in bounds I can't call a time out. The refs won't let me take one, the players have to take one at that point. Now they can see me try to call one and call one for me, but I think the ball got in-bounded and the tempo of the game just started moving too fast. I know Jalen (McDaniels) got the ball, we got it over mid-court to him, he's pivoting with two defenders on him, but they striped the ball from him and got a layup. Next play, we got it in and Devin (Watson) pushed the ball up the floor and got stripped, another layup. All of a sudden we get it in again, and this is the one I didn't see, and I'm trying to motion to someone at the other end maybe to see if we can get the time stopped on the game and I guess we dribbled it off of Jalen's heel. So we have back-to-back-to-back turnovers that lead to baskets and we find a way to get a foul on a three-point shot at the end to try and tie the game. We make two, miss the third, but even with that done, we foul and they make one free throw and we run a pretty good play with the time on the clock coming up the floor. AG (Aguek Arop) set a crushing screen on Deshon Taylor, I think it rocked him, but Devin just fumbled it up. So bitterly disappointed, but proud of my team. Fresno is a very good team and we played good basketball. I've said this in the past, but sometimes you play well when you're not rewarded. We made enough mistakes at the end that left a bad taste in our mouths. We fought back from an early deficit, we took a nice lead, we played with a nice rhythm sharing the ball and in a matter of a minute it all slipped away. That's credit to Fresno and their pressure defense, they pressed without fouling and made timely plays and that's why they won. With that being said, I like my team and I like how we're playing, obviously I wished we would've played better, but we'll bow our backs and come to practice and get ready to go play in Reno. They need to win to get a piece of first in the conference and we know what kind of environment we're going into, but it'll be another test for us to get us ready for the Mountain West tournament. We have to not let the last minute and 15 seconds of the game take our swagger and belief away that we're good enough to win the conference tournament and make it to the NCAA. I know I have a good group of kids that believe that in their hearts."

##### **On being the No. 4 seed versus No. 3 seed:**

"We'll see. Sometimes it's, be careful what you wish for. I think right now we know we're going to play UNLV, so we're going to open the conference tournament with a road game. We've done that before. We've played UNLV in the tournament on their home floor, and it's never easy. I think the last time we played them there we got down there in the conference tournament 20 or 30 points early in the game and had to fight all the way back to win it, so we know what's in store. We know it's going to be difficult, but if we're playing well and we're playing together, we have a chance to beat anybody. That is our task at hand now – get through Reno, stay healthy, try to get a little better, maybe work on a few things we haven't seen in a while and get ready for the conference opener. We're excited for that."

##### **On starting senior Michael Sohikish:**

"I just thought to give him that moment, after all the years on campus, to have his name called in front of this crowd, in this building and have them cheer for the way they did, I wanted to give him that memory. Michael's a good player, too, it's not like I threw a bad player out there. Michael is a very good player. I think he guarded hard and did all the right things, and they just made some shots early. I mean, Deshon Taylor, some of the shots he made were incredible. Incredible shots. So we tried to keep our confidence up, keep trying to make them make those hard shots, and fight our way back into the game. But I'm proud of Michael, and I'm proud he had the moment to be recognized for all of his contributions to the program."

### **On what the guys can learn from this game:**

"I mean, the frustrating part is we've been pressed late in a lot of games and we've handled it. We usually give the ball to Devin and he usually finds a way to fouled, and this is the game where it didn't happen, and it wasn't a surprise. This was a long season, and we've been through this situation a ton, where teams have pressed us late, late in the game, desperate and try to win. We usually find a way to make the right play, but today the tables turned on us and we didn't make the right play. Devin didn't get fouled, and Jalen didn't get fouled, and we turned them all over. It was like a perfect scenario: we had our time outs, so if we couldn't get the ball in, we could use one. If we got in trouble and we got trapped, we understood that if they tie us up, it's a jump ball and we get the next jump ball. Everything that was in our favor, was in our favor. We had time outs to take, and we had the next jump ball, but we didn't get tied up, and we didn't need to take a time out because we got the ball in. The problem is, the team knows this, Devin knows this, we all know this, that all the sudden if the 10 count is on and you got 10 seconds to get it across. If you take that timeout, if you feel the pressure, then you get another 10 to get it across. So obviously, we felt like we could break it without taking that, and that didn't happen on two of the plays. One of the plays we got it across and the next two, we didn't get it across. The third one, we dribbled off an ankle. Players make plays, and I told them, you know, I got faith in them to make the right play, and we didn't do it today, and I'll take responsibility because I had time outs in my pocket and maybe I should've taken one as soon as the second free-throw went in, but most of the time as a coach, if you take that free-throw, it's to find a way to get the ball in. Our press offense is our press offense. We know where we're supposed to be in our spacing and usually you take a time out because they overplay and you can't get it in. We got the ball in, and we got it on the bounce, but they trapped on the bounce and instead of making a play, we turned the ball over. Sometimes, that's on me. Maybe I could have done something to ease the pressure on them, I'm not sure. No matter how we slice it, we're going to look back and be disappointed, disappointed as players, disappointed as coaches, that we couldn't have done more down the stretch to win the game. But, I've been through this before and have seen these things happen both for us and against us. It's a long season and sometimes you're not rewarded for playing well, and this was the case because we played well but we weren't rewarded because we didn't play well until the end. There was an offensive rebound that we had in our hands. They took a tough shot and bounced. We had hands on the ball, they came up with it, it kicked out, made a three. It's one rebound that doesn't even give us the point when we're pressed. One play makes a game, one game makes a season. We didn't make that one play, they did, so now they're the three seed and we're the four seed. I will say this: I like our chances every bit as much as I like theirs to advance in the tournament. They're a very good team. Two very good teams played today. They did a good job preparing for us with the bye week. They had a few new wrinkles in, but I thought at halftime we made our adjustments. We fought from a 14, 15-point deficit to take a seven, eight-point lead late but couldn't close the game. I'm proud of how we played and put ourselves in that position, but I'm obviously not proud of how we closed the game, and that's on all of us."

### **San Diego State Guard Jeremy Hemsley**

#### **On tonight's game:**

"Just like coach said, I wish we closed that game better, but we can't take it back. My focus now is the Nevada game. I'm not going to obsess over the loss. We lost the game; it's over with. My job now is to keep being a good teammate and keep setting an example on the floor, so that's what I'm going to do. Of course I'm thinking about that being my last game in Viejas, I thought about it all day. It was memorable. It was a memorable night, despite the loss. I had my whole family here, so there's bigger things in basketball. I can't obsess over this loss, even though I wanted to win and we all did. At the end of the day, I'm breathing, I'm alive and I got my family, I got my coaches, I got my teammates, so in a lot of ways it could be worse. At the end of the day, it's just basketball. I wanted to win the game, we didn't win the game. It's just time to move onto the next one."

#### **On SDSU's fans:**

"The fans are 100 percent one of the biggest reasons why I came to San Diego State, so that wasn't a surprise. I saw that even before I came on this campus. That's something we feed off of, is the crowd, and I think they did a good job of just pushing us and staying in the game. Even when we were down, they were still cheering. Like I said, we fed off of it."

**On Fresno State's pressure at the end of the game:**

"That's on the players. We just got to be better. We let them speed us up a little bit. Having two senior guards on the court, we got to know that we have a time out, so if anything, I'm mad at myself for not at least calling the time out and recognizing that. I think they just sped us up. They did a good job of pressuring. We just got to be better, 100 percent, if we want to win games."

**On coaching staff at SDSU:**

"It's been amazing. I remember when I first committed, Dutch was probably the first coach that texted me. He texted me saying that he's going to do everything he can to make sure that I would be the player that they wanted me to be, and that I wanted to be. I remember when I got that text, I was excited and I was happy that I committed to San Diego State because he didn't have to do that. He didn't have to reach out. He wasn't the head coach at the time. I got a good relationship with all of my coaches. I think that it's something that will last for the rest of my life. I think I built relationships with them because of the type of person I am and I was willing to go hard for them. I think the respect is reciprocated between me and my coaches and I'm going to miss them. I love them. Like I said on the radio the other day, I would die on the court for any of the guys, any of the coaches, and I mean that when I say that. It was fun, it was a fun four years and I'm glad that I was able to play under the staff that I was able to play under. We got to win three more games and there's still a lot to show and there's still a lot to do, so that's really where my mindset is at."

**On turning a loss into a positive:**

"By winning. Winning the game. Winning each game that's in front of us and we can't let this loss sink us and lead to more losses. It happened and we can't take it back, so I think if we want a positive out of this, we just got to go hard in practice because that's where you win games. I think if we do that, then we'll have a good chance of winning in Reno."

**Fresno State Head Coach Justin Hutson****On the final three minutes of the game:**

"We struggled. We struggled during the game. We didn't make a lot of shots that we normally make. Credit to them. We got in foul trouble a little bit. We couldn't play big Nate [Grimes] as much as we would like. What happened is, what our guys are, is they're resilient. They're resilient. We have a press that we've been working on, so we wanted to do that without fouling. It helped us out."

**On what tonight's win does for them moving forward:**

"Those points aren't going to help as much on our next game. We've proven that we're going to continue to play until the end. That doesn't mean we're going to win, but we're going to continue to fight and play till the end."

**On Christian Gray:**

"He plays with a lot of heart. I think more than talk about his play is talk about the type of character he has. It just permeates all the way through the group. We talked to him about why he was playing, and we talked to him about why he wasn't. Sometimes it was because of injury and sometimes it was because we thought he was getting beat out. He kept working, and he kept working and kept getting better and cheering for his teammates. When you're engaged with the team, good things happen for us. We really needed him tonight. He was big tonight."

**On Christian Gray's defensive performance:**

"Yeah. Kudos to Christian [Gray] for staying ready. Staying ready and coming out and playing big for us tonight."

**On if he gets surprised by Deshon Taylor's crazy shots:**

"I was earlier in the year. Maybe earlier in the year I was saying, 'no, no, no, yes.' Now he gets a couple of those a game. We talked about him not turning the ball over and taking care of it. He knows what a good shot is. He gets a couple of those a game, and he's been making them. He's shooting a good percentage, so as long as he doesn't shoot too many of them and he keeps everybody involved, I'm not quite saying, 'no, no, no,' when he shoots it."

**On Saturday's senior night:**

"I've had a lot of senior nights, and just because I wasn't the head coach it was emotional. Just seeing those guys leave. This one will probably be a little bit more. It will probably be a little bit more being the head coach. This being my first year and what those guys have meant to me and all our coaching staff. I couldn't have gotten a better group than those guys. It's going to be a sad day, but we're going to make it a celebration. We've got to get back and get ready for San Jose."

**-SDSU-**