



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### UCLA at San Diego State Postgame Quotes

SDSU 73, UCLA 58

Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif.

Nov. 25, 2020

### San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

#### On the victory:

"We've always had a defensive identity and I think that showed again tonight. The good news is, as well as we played, there's a lot of room for growth with this team at both ends of the floor. So it's a first step. We're excited to come away with a victory and happy as heck that we're actually playing basketball. It's been 264 days since we played, so it's fun to get this season started with these two seniors (Matt Mitchell and Jordan Schakel) by my side."

#### On his team's defensive performance in the second half and rebounding:

"You know, we played pretty good defense the first half. Even though they shot 50 percent, we were able to force them into 10 turnovers, and that was a huge part of it because they were scoring when they got shots. We thought the key to the game was going to be rebounding, and we did a really good job on the glass. They're a very good rebounding team and obviously much better when (Jalen) Hill is on the floor."

#### On Matt Mitchell's performance:

"Yeah, Matt's been good his entire career and continues to improve. You know, I'd like to see him up his assists a little bit. But if they don't double team him like they did in the past, then he went to work. If he draws a double, I want him to get an assist and that's the same on the open floor. So I like all my guys aggressive. I like Jordan (Schakel) aggressive. I like Matt aggressive. But when they pull a second defender, they've got to find a teammate, and that's what we worked hard to do with both of these young guys."

#### On his team's depth as a key to overtaking UCLA in the second half:

"I just think we have great depth. You know, we used a lot of guys, 10 guys, and we don't drop off much. This might be as deep a team as we've ever had. UCLA was short-handed. They were missing two players and potentially two starters, so I just think we wore them down. We picked them up full court the entire game, and I think we just wore them down to the point where maybe they were on tired legs at the end of the game."

#### On his team's preparation heading into the season and this game given the COVID-19 pandemic:

"We've been very fortunate. I mean, San Diego State has done a good job keeping the safety of these student-athletes at the forefront. So we worked through protocols we were very cautious. We shut the department down for two weeks to make sure when we had a little outbreak that we got it under control, and we've abided by everything we're supposed to abide by so we can have a season. So it's a credit to these young guys to stay in their pods, to socially distance, to wear masks, to wash their hands and to try and do all the things that everybody in the country is trying to do. So we're grateful for the university to give us this opportunity to play basketball in a safe environment."

#### On defeating a program like UCLA:

"We expect to win and that's no disrespect to UCLA. But Coach (Steve) Fisher said a long time ago we're not a one-hit wonder. We've built a program, so we've got great respect on the West Coast and within our conference, picked to win the league again after losing three starters. So we got guys program guys like Matt (Mitchell) and Jordan (Schakel) that have just carried on. They're great leaders and they set the tone for this year's team. We add pieces, we develop players and we expect to win. Does that mean we win all the time? No, but our expect expectation is to win every game you play."

**On taking charges in a game compared to practice:**

"It's hard to do, take charges because I don't like taking a lot in practice because I don't want guys falling in other guys' legs. We have the unique ability to not do it in practice yet in game-play step up and be willing to throw our body in front of someone else and take that charge. So that's a credit to these guys paying attention, knowing that I don't want that kind of physicality in practice. But come game-time, we want to be physical and we want to throw our body in the way of the opponent trying to get a charge into every game."

## San Diego State Senior Forward Matt Mitchell

**On the team's play in the beginning of the game and how the team settled down:**

"We were playing solid basketball. We were a little unstable to start and they (UCLA) got off to a hot start, but it just took us coming in and coming together and telling each other that that we needed to stick to it (the game plan) and play hard and move back up on the basketball and play tighter defense, as we do in practice. (After we came together) We were able to play a little bit more aggressive and play our game and the game flowed our way."

**On beating a ranked team and starting off the season with a big win:**

"It is big. I see it as our first of hopefully many wins. We just got to come in here and stay aggressive and keep playing our game and follow the game plan that the coaches are giving us, because they seem to be a foolproof."

**On how his game has transformed with his new team and with the changes in his body:**

"I've always seen my game to be at all three levels and that I could always do a little bit of everything. I felt that I had the ability to punish down low, and I missed some shots that that I felt normally go in. But at the same time, I feel like this is my game. So, I do not think I am a different player. But I think that I've got my body in shape, and I came in here and ready to go."

**On playing at SDSU as a senior:**

"It's a good feeling. Just knowing that me and Jordan (Schakel) and I are the leaders of this program, and we are looked to when it comes down to make a defensive or offensive play, not only for ourselves but for others. It definitely feels good to have that have that leadership in our hands and be leaned on."

**On playing without fans:**

"It is very different. But at the same time, when they started playing music, started generating the crowd noises here and there that, you could just tell we got that little feel of energy from that outside sort of source of a crowd. It was different not having fans, and (instead) having 1 through 15 (his teammates) to create our (team's) energy for 40 minutes. But at the end of the day, I felt like we did a great job of it (playing without a crowd)."

## San Diego State Senior Guard Jordan Schakel

**On the team's personality:**

"In terms of the team's personality, we stayed level-headed the whole game, so when they came out hot, we did not panic. We trust each other and we knew shots were going to fall for us and we knew we were going to get stops. So, we have a good level-headed group. We are overall a taller and longer team, with Nathan (Mensah) back from what he went through, when he shoots and Aquek (Arop) and those guys shoot, they make a difference with their length. You can not teach length, and we are happy to have those guys on the floor with us."

**On how the team stay's humble:**

"It always feels good to win. We always want to be the best version of ourselves that we can be, and that is what we try to focus on. Coach (Dutcher) made a great point, he thought we had great defense for 40 minutes, and I did as well. And that is all we can control. UCLA is a really good team. We're happy for the win."

**On the SDSU bench's play:**

"We love our bench and we love our young guys. A lot of guys played well tonight and came out with great energy, rebounded, got a lot of tip-ins, and just were overall aggressive. We are really grateful for our bench."

**On playing without fans:**

"They (SDSU) did an amazing job with the crowd noise. We had never heard it (the artificial crowd noise) to that extent and there was some times where it felt like a real game. But I also think that it helps us stay levelheaded when we're not looking to the crowd for anything, we know we have to bring it ourselves. We just know that we have to bring (energy) ourselves, to look our bench and look to our coaches (for energy). It is easier for us on defense (without fans) because we can hear each other talk and our voices are louder, with not as many voices in the crowd."

**-SDSU-**