



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### Colorado State at San Diego State Postgame Quotes Steve Fisher Court at Viejas Arena | San Diego, Calif. Feb. 25, 2020

#### San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

##### Opening statement:

"Thanks everyone for staying up so late with us tonight. If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times: winning a college basketball game is hard. I don't care who you're playing, or where you're playing. It's hard to win a game. Colorado State came in here with 19 wins and played really good basketball, and they gave us everything we wanted. We found a way, like we did against UNLV without getting a win, to guard at a really elite level in the second half. We manufactured enough offense this game to get ourselves a victory, but defensive rebounding is always the key. There are games where we're spectacular offensively and those are the games we win by 10-12 points, but these (games where we aren't at our best offensively) are the ones that matter the most. The ones where you're not at your best offensively, but you find a way to win because the defense is so good. We played really elite defense in the second half."

##### On experience coaching the graduating seniors:

"I told Nolan (Narain) before the game, I'd had him for five years, and just told him 'I'm more impressed with him as a person than I ever was as a basketball player, and you're a good basketball player.' But the person he's become here at San Diego State is a credit to his family and to Nolan himself. To Gianni (Wetzell) and KJ (Feagin) I just said what a joy it was to have them for one year. (How grateful I am) That they chose to spend their final year of college athletics here with us, and how happy I was to be able to coach them for that one year, and what a great job they've done leading this team this year. Hats off to three great seniors."

##### On senior Nolan Narain starting the game with a three:

"I said Nolan, 'we're going to pick and pop you and if you're open and you feel like you want to take it, take it, if not — hand off.' So he popped and he took it and it went around the rim 72 times and took seven minutes off the clock, but it finally went in. That was a great way to start the game with Nolan making a three."

##### On if the players were too focused on being a hero and taking big shots:

"I think we moved the ball and missed some 3's and went A to B to C to D, all the way around for a three in the corner. We had a lot of short shot clocks, we were trying to move the ball and play the right way. We had nine assists at halftime. That's what we had for the whole game against UNLV, and then I think we ended up with 13 assists on 18 baskets, so that's a pretty good assist to basket ratio. The thing we did this game was we got to the foul line a lot, they fouled us own the stretch and we attacked the basket. We got to the line, and they're a team that shoots twice as many free throws as their opponent. So that's a real important stat against them because they make more free throws than their opponents take on the season. That's winning basketball. That's a stat the wins anywhere in the country, and they had that stat. We're nowhere close to that stat, but we were tonight, we got to the line and we were able to win the game with the line."

##### On Jordan shooting:

"Yeah, Jordan (Schakel) can shoot the ball. He had a really good looking three at the end, I think it was a four-point game and Matt (Mitchell) kicked it out to him. But he bottled the catch just enough, where he tried to readjust it and shoot it, I wish he would have maybe just brought it down. (I wish he would have) Shot faked or moved it, because he kind of fumbled on the catch, but he's extremely confident so he's going to let it go. He made some really important ones (three-pointers) today too, I don't think anyone wants to leave Jordan Schakel open from three because he gets it up in a hurry, and he makes a high percentage."

**On pregame feeling in locker room:**

"They're so confident, they think they're going to win every game. So they expected to win tonight. It was hard, but I don't think they ever thought they were going to lose. No matter what the score was. They're just a confident bunch and they don't overreact to stuff. They're fifth-year seniors, third and fourth-year juniors, they're grown men. They play like that and they behave like that in the locker room."

## San Diego State Junior Forward Matt Mitchell

**On Jordan Schakel's play:**

"Jordan (Schakel) does a great deal for us. Today he came off the bench, he came in and he gave us energy on both sides of the ball. He's another energizer coming off the bench starting whatever we need. He was able to come in today and do what he did and we were able to find him open and he was able to put the ball up."

**On was the halftime message any different this time around:**

"No, the message was the same. The message is the same every game. We do what we do: play defense, hard, at a high level, move the ball. I just felt like this game we were able to flow into the game and our offense looked a lot better."

**On the loss and what the team learned from it and applied to this game:**

"I think we were reassured. We learned that we have grit. This is a tough team and we're able to fight through adversity at any moment in time. I think we've known that before, and we've seen that earlier in the season, but it was just getting back to it. I think it was good for us to have these rough last few games."

**On how hard it is to come back after a loss and play that next game:**

"I think teams just get down on themselves and instead of bouncing back and collectively going at it again, they just kind of piece away and just kind of tear (each other) apart. I think we did a great job of staying together. The coaches did a good job of keeping us together. I think this is a mature group of guys that was able to come together and say that that was our one loss and we didn't want another one, especially on senior night, (we wanted) to try to get our seniors out with a win."

## San Diego State Junior Guard Malachi Flynn

**On seeing teammate Nolan Narain coming out firing:**

"That was fun to see. We didn't know he was going to do that and he just came out and shot it. We were all happy for him so that was a good moment."

**On today's game feeling similar to the game against UNLV:**

"It was a little different. UNLV was up on us the whole game by like seven-plus points. We were close this game, it was back and forth, but (the two games) were definitely similar."

**On turning it on at the end of the game:**

"As a group, we didn't want to lose. We didn't want to lose two in a row, so we just buckled down on the defensive end and started getting stops and people made shot."

**On possibly settling for too many threes in the past couple games:**

"I wouldn't say so (that the team had settled for too many threes), we got a lot of people that can shoot, myself, Matt (Mitchell), Jordan (Schakel), KJ (Feagin). We've got a lot of shooters and that's what we do. Some days they don't fall, but eventually they're going to fall and that's what happened (today)."

## Colorado State Head Coach Niko Medved

### **On SDSU's second-half performance:**

"They're (SDSU is) an elite defensive team. They really ramped up their defensive intensity (in the second half) and I thought we struggled to execute at times. We did a really nice job defensively tonight and I think the numbers prove that, but in that final stretch we weren't able to capitalize. We had a couple of really good looks for some really good shooters that didn't go in. That's basketball, they just made a couple more plays than we did."

### **On the game's first-half play:**

"They had a center [Nolan Narain] who hadn't made a three all year make one early and that's basketball. I thought our guys played really well and we just came bouncing right back-- I thought we played terrific in the first half. I thought we responded to everything that they threw at us, I thought we responded the whole game. I told our guys I don't believe and I never will believe in moral victories, we had this right there for us to win. I thought we really had a chance here tonight, it was right there. Just came up a little short."

### **On SDSU's second-half intensity:**

"They [SDSU] are a number one or number two seed in the NCAA Tournament, they're an elite team. They're elite defensively and not just in our league, in the nation. That's what they do and they ramped up their intensity (in the second half), you have to really go at these guys and they're difficult to score on not (for) just us, but for anybody. We had to be a little bit better in our execution there down the stretch but our guys held a ton of grit. We kept battling defensively and when they made a run, we came right back, and we were right there at the end, we just needed a couple of plays. [Yanni] Wetzell got a huge offensive rebound there late when we got them to miss and if we come up with that ball, who knows."

### **On Malachi Flynn:**

"Kendall Morrow is just awesome and he spent most of the time on him tonight. I thought we were pretty intentional about how we wanted to guard some of his things, our guys were really locked in, not just him (Morrow), but our whole team. We were really good defensively tonight and it's pretty hard for me to complain that we could have done a much better job on Malachi Flynn. He's a tremendous player and he made some big shots down the stretch, but we made him work and that was our game plan. I've got no beef with that."

**-SDSU-**