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San Diego State Baseball
Head Coach Shaun Cole
Introductory Press Conference Quotes
July 26, 2023
Fowler Athletics Center

Opening Statement:

"To be introduced as the sixth head coach in program history really resonates with me, that's impressive. I didn't know that until a couple of days ago. And it's such an honor to lead a program that's only been led by five other head coaches. I want to say thank you to the administration for supporting me in this decision. I want to say thank you to our players. I know they had a huge, huge say in this and they support me and that's huge moving forward with what we want to do, how we want to elevate our program moving forward. Having the support of your players means a lot. Also, thank you to (Athletic Director) JD Wicker and (executive staffers) Derek Grice and Tim Lanski. I want to say thank you to Coach Mark Martinez as well. He's the one that reached out and called me and brought me here and brought me back to the West Coast. My wife and I are from the West Coast. I spent some time on the other side of the country for a while with USA Baseball and Eastern Kentucky University. This is a time in our lives where our parents are starting to get a little bit older and to be able to spend more time and be closer to them was a value for us. And Coach Martinez, I just want to say thank you for his support and my time here with him. I know this was a tough decision for him and his family to retire, but we want to wish him well. And I hope that he still feels comfortable enough to be around the program and support me."

On knowing if this opportunity was coming:

"When Mark (Martinez) called me about the pitching job, he and Tim Lanski reached out to me about my interest in taking over the program when Mark retired. So there were some conversations on the table. Even a year-and-a-half ago, Mark and I talked about signing a contract through his retirement. So I don't want to say I didn't see it coming. I'm from the Pacific Northwest and I was walking into the All-Star Game (in Seattle) when I got the phone call from JD and Derek and Tim that Mark was retiring. The expectations the whole time were that he was going to see his contract through and there was going to be a strong chance that I would be the next guy."

On why SDSU Baseball hasn't reached its full potential:

"One of the reasons why I was brought here is that pitching seemed to be the area that was holding this program back from getting out of a regional. That dynamic is not going to change. I'm going to stay with the pitching and that was drilled in my head a long time ago by former Arizona head coach Andy Lopez, who said, 'if you want to win championships, you better know how to pitch.' Just looking at the last number of years, or even in the last decade, I think that's been the one area once we've gotten into regionals, pitching has held us back. If you look in Omaha, and I say this all the time, because people are always talking about how [Charles Schwab Field] is not a home run park, it's hard to hit home runs. Well, I think one thing that's overlooked is most of those teams that get to Omaha can pitch really, really well. So yeah, pitching is going to be the

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Shaun Cole Press Conference Quotes

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backbone of what we're going to do moving forward. Obviously, we need to improve on the defensive side and offensive side. It'll make my life a lot less stressful. Calling pitches in 2-1 ball games all the time is a little nerve wracking, but I look forward to improving those two areas. And I think when we do that, it's going to automatically elevate us to a whole new level."

On the status of All-Mountain West catcher Poncho Ruiz:

"He signed a free agent deal with the (Minnesota) Twins. Which is good. I think Poncho and some of our other guys, as much as I would love to have them back, they need to start their pro careers. They're not getting any younger."

On his leadership evolution and what fans and student-athletes should expect:

"I was the youngest pitching coach in the Pac-10 when I was hired, and I made the jump from a junior college to University of Arizona, and Coach Lopez gave me a ton of responsibility in my first year. I think in those first number of years, I was trying to justify to myself that I belonged at that level. And I was doing national recruiting for them. The journey has taken me to a place now where there is a lot more balance to what I do; I think I communicate better now. I also try to empower the student-athletes to have a little more ownership with what they're doing in their careers. What you can expect from our program is a team that's going to be highly aggressive when they play. And winning is extremely important. We will also develop quality young men in our program because it goes beyond just being really good baseball players. I say this all the time, culture and winning go hand in hand. So if you're winning, everyone's happier, everyone's enjoying things a lot more, and that enhances the culture. But the culture must also be in a good place and be strong enough to give the team and the players clarity to focus on winning games."

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