



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS
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San Diego State Head Coach Brian Dutcher

Opening Statement:

“Well, I was at the soccer game last night, had a great time at Snapdragon watching Wrexham and Man U. It was a lot of fun, a great event, the stadium was sold out and really had a good time with the family watching a little summer soccer.

I want to congratulate Shaun on becoming our new head baseball coach at San Diego State, excited for that for his opportunity to join the ranks and I know the baseball program will be in great hands.

We're working out, we get our summer workouts going and have the whole team finally in town on the court together for the first time and excited by what I see out there. The returning players obviously key everything but I like the newcomers, what they're showing in early workouts and excited to continue to build the team for this coming season. I know we just announced that we're starting a home and home with the Zags, Gonzaga. And we've had that series before, and it has been good for both programs. And now that we've found time and availability, it worked out for the both of us that we're going to start a home and home again. I saw Mark over the summer. We've been talking for a while about doing this. Weren't sure if we wanted to do a neutral or a home and home and it's getting harder and harder to get home in homes to get quality opponents to come to your building. And so, I think it's better in both of our best interest to do a home and home. We're excited by that opportunity to give the fans a year from now, obviously we'll go to Gonzaga this year and bring them back the following year. It's always good to put that kind of non-conference home game on the schedule. So, it's great to get that series going again and we're excited for that opportunity.”

On Jaedon LeDee returning and forgoing the opportunity for transfer NIL opportunities:

“That's how we won last year with grown men, fifth year seniors. And we'll have fifth year seniors again this year and fourth year seniors like Lamont. Having that kind of experience is immeasurably important to success. And when you talk about turning down money, they're not only turning down professional opportunities, money wise, but transferring and getting NIL at other schools, so both Lamont and Jaedon I'm sure had opportunities to go somewhere else for a more NIL than they would have gotten here. But sometimes it's about the journey too. And obviously I know the importance of being compensated financially, but sometimes it's about the journey and are you willing to take less to get more, and both these guys are back at San Diego State and will lead our program this season.

On how the Gonzaga series came about:

"It's just the fact where it backs up to conference and that's always a concern, where you're going to come back off Christmas break, get on a plane, fly up there and play and then play your conference opener as early as that next Tuesday. So that's the concern. But at the end of the day, I think everyone knows we're not ducking anybody competitively and we're worried about the conference opener, but I'm trying to play as many competitive games as we can, that will help our resume come March and put us in a position to get a high seed in the NCAA tournament. We can have the kind of year we want to have."

On if getting a hard game like Gonzaga is a reflection of the potential of the team:

"It must mean I feel pretty good about my job security. Playing this kind of schedule to go into BYU, everyone knows what that is. We're going to Grand Canyon that environment is insane. Going to play at Gonzaga. We have the return game finally at UCSD and we just know how the city rivalries play out, we know what that atmosphere will be like and so I don't know how the other teams are going to play, I think they're going to be good, but I know the atmospheres are going to be out of this world. And so, I've got a group I feel is playing in enough of those atmospheres where we won't shy away from that and will embrace it and we'll see where we're at every step of the way."

On the transfers:

"Yeah, Jay Pal just got to campus. He's skilled. He's talented. He can play multiple positions, which is usually the sign of being a good Aztec. He's got versatility in his game. So, we're excited to have Jay Pal here. And then Reece Waters, obviously Sixth Man of the Year in the Pac 12, dynamic scorer, somebody we recruited out of high school, so we know his game well, is just ready to become the player he wants to be. And maybe not as much as being here that now he's in his third fourth year of college basketball. He's ready to make the next step and he's doing it. So we're excited by both of our transfers and like I say transfers are important to us, but our program is set by the high school guys that are here four and five years like Lamont and so they come in and they have someone to look up to how do we do things at San Diego State all they have to do is look at Lamont and he will set the tone for a lot of what we do."

On the incoming freshmen:

"I just smile every time I look at them. And whether they get there this year or not we'll see but Miles Heide is strong, and he's got a physical presence about him as a freshman. BJ Davis is just dynamic. He's electric on the floor, and just needs to start fitting into what we're doing figuring out where his opportunities are going to be, but he's a high-level competitor. And then Magoon is just oozing with potential. I mean, 6'11 with skill and can shoot the ball. The beauty of coaching and the beauty of every new year is getting all these pieces together and that's the challenge. We'll see how it all fits together. And we haven't mentioned Demarshay, Demarshay has put a lot of work in and transformed his body and is looking good too. So just because he's in his third year, redshirt sophomore. We're expecting big things from Demarshay too. So, we have a lot of really good pieces."

On the impact of playing in the national championship on recruiting:

"Yeah, obviously we got behind recruiting but like I said, I got back on Tuesday, like the team did and I was in the office Wednesday. Obviously, we enjoyed our success last year, but that will have very little impact on what we do this year. I like Lamont, Jaedon, Micah, I like all the guys that are returning, Darrion, they've all gotten better. I can see it already. So, they haven't said well what we did is good enough. They all know they have to get better; they've all gotten better over the summer. I can see it already. So we're just in the building process constantly. Whether it's recruiting or getting our own guys better we're on that journey."

On what retaining players says about the culture of the program:

"I just think when you hear all these coaches that have been in the program, 1, 2, 3 years, and they're talking about their culture, I just say try 24, 25 years, that's a culture. And so Steve Fisher started it many years ago. I was blessed to be a part of it and then take it over. And so we have a good culture and culture is about how you treat people and the people you bring in and we've got a really good culture."

On what kind of statement is made walking into the Gonzaga series:

"I think it's two of the best programs on the West Coast playing each other. So, I think that's a great thing."

On the outcome of the Mountain West situation:

"Just there's a lot of moving pieces, and I just trust President De La Torre and John David Wicker to navigate us through the process. Every conference is going through this, everyone's wondering what's going to happen next in their own conference. So, it's historic times in college athletics, and we're all just kind of dealing with it on a daily basis, but sometimes it takes months and years to figure out where this is all going at the end of the day."

San Diego State Senior Guard Lamont Butler

On the importance of giving back to the community by doing a basketball camp:

"Yeah, my camp is on August 12 and 13th of next month. It's important to give back because when I grew up, there were a lot of people that gave back to me and put me in the right position and just guided me to where I am now. So, for me to be able to be in this position to help younger kids to get to where I am or at least just give them knowledge and know what it can be. I feel like that's very important."

On the excitement for the upcoming schedule:

"Oh, yeah, I love it. I love it. I love to be able to compete against high level teams and being at great atmospheres and this kind of hypes you up. You want to do good and win and this is a winning program and to show that we can win against these high-level programs is big time for us."

On the draft camp experience:

"It was great. It was pretty fun. I had a really good time. I was able to see where I was at. I feel that I competed at a high level with them. I just was able to get really good feedback for my game and be able to improve upon things that maybe I didn't do as good on last year and just tighten up my game and be able to show what I can do next year, at the next level."

On what Reese Waters will add to the team:

"Yeah, Reese is like coach said, a very dynamic scorer, he can score at all three levels. He has a really good handle, and he really competes on the defensive end and he doesn't take anything for granted. He's out there, trying to guard guys, playing very hard. He's really just a bucket, he can get to the rim, mid-range, scores off the dribble, pick and roll he scores. So, he just a high-level scorer."

On Reese's level of defending:

"He's a high-level defender. Like I said he really competes. He doesn't really know our defense. So, to say like not yet just because we were just getting started but I think it's going to be really good and really dangerous on that side."

On what SDSU culture means for him:

"SDSU culture means a lot. I mean, it's the reason I came back, I want to be a part of the culture. I wanted to keep winning for this program. Coming in I was a freshman too. So, I had guys like Matt Mitchell and Jordan Schakel to lead me along. I feel like it's my turn now that I'm a senior to bring along the new freshmen and transfers in to get used to this culture and really embrace it. And now that's just my job as a leader on this team."

On similarities between him three years ago and BJ Davis:

"I definitely see similarities. Right now, he's moving very fast. I remember coming in, I was moving very fast. I had to yell at him to slow down and I see a lot of similarities. He competes at a high level like Dutch said. He comes in with the mentality that he's just going to come in and hoop and have fun and if he makes mistakes, oh, well. He's just going at it with a great mindset and playing hard every day, so I definitely see some similarities."

On how long it took for him to finally slow down:

"Took me a couple of years. I'm still trying to figure out pace and stuff, but I've gotten a lot better from watching film and playing at a high level, playing in the tournament and stuff so I feel like my game is finally coming to that point."