



## **SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS**

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**San Diego State Men's Basketball Press Conference**  
**February 22, 2024**

### **Head Coach Brian Dutcher**

#### **Opening Statement**

"Well, it's time to get back to work. All that you have to rely on is the work you put in. Obviously, you're disappointed. We went and played Utah State and fought our way into a one possession game and were unable to close at the end. That's a credit to Utah State, their crowd and their team. Now we have to go back-to-back road games. It's not who you're playing, it's how you're playing. We have to play better. We have to play better on the road. We're looking forward to our opportunity to go to Fresno and try to get a road win, which is the hardest thing to do in college basketball."

#### **On what San Diego State could have done differently against Utah State:**

"I liked the fact we took care of the ball. We had nine turnovers. The game before we had 20, so we took care of the ball. We just didn't make enough shots. We had three three-pointers in the game and Byrd's was the buzzer beater at the end. So, we had two threes. It's hard to win on the road if you're not making shots, so to hold them to 68 points at home was a good defensive effort, even though they played well. We didn't make enough shots and make enough plays to win on the road."

#### **On not thinking about past road struggles when going on the road:**

"All you can control is how you're playing. We try to play better basketball every time we go and we're playing better. It hasn't equaled a win, but we played well at Nevada and lost in overtime. We played okay at Utah State in a hard environment and made it a one-point game late with chances to take the lead and didn't do it. You play hard, but you have to make timely plays and that's it. That's the NBA or any level you play. When you go on the road, you have to play better than you do at home in order to get a win and we haven't been able to do that to close a game out."

#### **On if he's ever seen a Mountain West race like this:**

"I think seven teams still with a legitimate chance to win the conference. Obviously, it's not a true round robin schedule so scheduling will enter somewhat into who wins the league. Obviously, we want a harder schedule. The teams that we play once are usually lower in the standings but that doesn't mean they're not capable of beating us. Based on how you're projected, the tougher schedule you play. The teams that are picked near the top play a harder schedule. Utah State, obviously they have a very good team, but they play Nevada once and UNLV once, probably an advantage to them. Everybody in the conference has that dilemma, who you're playing, so we have to play well. We had a chance to be in first place when we left Utah State and we failed to take advantage of that opportunity."

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**On what the team's effort:**

"All you can do is trust the work. They put their work in. They work hard every day. It's not just practice. They're here in the morning. They're here at night by themselves and they're working. Now they have to be rewarded for their work. That's confidence and that's belief and knowing that your coaches believe in you and play your game. If the shot doesn't go in, and it's the right shot, we'll live with it."

**Senior Forward Jaedon LeDee**

**On San Diego State's mindset entering their final four games of the regular season:**

"Every game is important. I was thinking about that the other day, only four games left, it kind of just flies by. We're so locked in. We're trying to just finish strong and we're taking every game as its own battle."

**On how tight the Mountain West race is:**

"It's a great conference. Every game is a battle. You can't really not take anybody seriously, especially the top half, but even the bottom half, they are going to try and compete every night, so it's really cool."

**On mindset after tough loss to Utah State:**

"The team's fine. We battled and played our hearts out. I mean that's really all you can ask for at the end of the day. Utah State played really well at home so kudos to them. We are going to keep battling, keep fighting."

**-SDSU-**