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San Diego State vs. Nevada Postgame Quotes

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

February 12, 2017

SDSU head coach Steve Fisher

Opening statement:

"A lot easier on all of us when you can come up after a game like today. Easier on me, easier on you to talk about us and write about us. We played well. We brought a lot of energy and I kind of piggybacked what you said our thought of the day was going to be on Friday and that was, 'Fight the right way'. And allow you to have that determined presence on both sides of the ball, and we had that. Early on Malik [Pope] kind of set the tone with his aggressive play, especially offensively when he made two or three baskets, and Jeremy was smart aggressive when he attacked to the rim. And we were productive with it. Good, solid, well-deserved team victory, against a very good team. Against a team that was tied for first in the conference and is very talented, skilled, 18-5 coming in, and we did what we thought we could do: fight, win, together at home.. Our crowd helped us. We were not full. We need to get our students all of our compliments back out. I'm scheduled to go out next week, and I don't know where I'm going, but I'm going some place on Monday to kind of see if I can help raise the flag on that point. But the people that were here were great. They were loud, they were engaged, energetic and helpful. Trey [Kell getting] over a thousand [points] was a great milestone for him. He made some really thoughtful plays, especially on attacking, pivoting, scoring inside against their guards. He did what he knew he could do in a really thoughtful manner. Happy and proud of what we've done.

On if the team gained more than a win today with the level of energy they played with:

"I would hope that we would. And we talked about this on Friday: about all good teams have 'it.' They have that look and fell, like 'We're good, and I know we're going to play well.' Not, 'I hope we play well.' As Trey said, 'Sometimes when you lose 5 out of 6 tough games, do you really have it?' We talked about that, it's important and I'm hopeful that a game like this will [lead to] what you say: Be a catapult for that feeling about who we are individually and collectively. We'll see. We're going to go to Utah State, to Logan, for a game on Wednesday, and they're good. They're especially good at home. So we'll be tested again with no crowd for us. But today, I think what you said is well put. We said, 'There's nothing easy on my watch.' Zylan ran one ball down that looked like it was going to be a guaranteed dunk, and he just willed himself to say, 'You're not going to get an easy basket on us.' You do what you do and do it better than anybody and feel good about yourself."

On Trey Kell's 1000-point milestone:

"Trey is a really, really good player and a great teammate. And I know he's proud of the fact that he cracked the thousand point barrier. That makes him feel good. But, I think he would've been embarrassed had we stopped the game and presented him with the ball. He wanted to win more than anything else, and that's what attracted him to me, and us to him. He's a winner. That's what he saw in SDSU. We were a good fit, a good marriage for one another, and he gets tired of me talking about how smart he is, but he's a smart player and he's a very proud player. We need more of that and then some as we move forward."

On game plan against Nevada senior guard Marcus Marshall:

"Well, we said you have to crowd them, you have to make them feel you. We wanted to switch any ball screens they were involved with, but when they just got the ball and try to size you up and take a couple of dribbles, that's when they're going to shoot it. Marshall and [senior guard David] Fenner both. So we said, 'Crowd them. Don't let them get around you off the bounce, but crowd them.' And I thought we did that, he did that, others did that. I think right now, Marshall has been in a bit of a shooting slump, but he can play. He's either the leading, or second-leading, scorer in the conference, he's a volume shooter, and he can make hard threes. I've seen it first hand. So, we did a pretty good job of making him take hard threes, and fortunately for us, not a lot of them went in."

On starting senior forward Valentine Izundu:

"I think Val brings value in a variety of ways. He can move his feet. We started him on [sophomore guard Jordan] Caroline, and any ball screen involving Caroline we wanted to double-team. We call it 'Hot.' But he can keep a guy in front of him. When Caroline tried to get on one him he did a pretty good job of just moving his feet and sizing up, and he can rebound the ball. He's a big presence in there, not just blocking shots, but he can get some balls, or keep two people from getting balls at the other end.

On if the game plan was to focus more on putting the ball into the post:

"We told them to be smart aggressive. Know who you are. We shot 35 threes in the last game. Too many. Jeremy was six of 12, Max Hoetzel was five for nine. I said, 'If you can do that, shoot twenty. But if you can't, just move the ball a little bit.' We had some timely threes today. I thought Matt Shrigley had two big threes in a portion of the game where it was pivotal to keep the lead when they were creeping back a little bit. Malik brings that to us also. He's got the size to be able to back you in and shoot over you... But we don't say you have to throw it inside. We said you have to be a smart player and know the flow of the game.

In having starters play longer than usual:

"The staff, when I said 'what do you think?' they said leave them in, let them stay, they don't look tired. We told them, 'if you don't have a focus and a competitive fight in you, whether it's 30 seconds in, or 30 minutes in, we're going to sub you. So if you want to play, play hard. Compete.' And I thought we did that and we had a decent flow going. I don't know whether at times we subbed just to sub; I try not to do that. Dakarai (Allen) played all 20 minutes in the first half, and probably should have come out, and I asked him at one time out 'do you need a minute or two' and he said 'no, this timeout is all I need.' So you have to rely a little bit on your eye, but also a feel... and they know that if they ask to come out they ask to go back in, and we'll put them back in fairly quickly."

SDSU junior guard Trey Kell**On 1,000-point career game:**

"I didn't know about it until someone brought it up to me a couple of days ago. I didn't come into the game thinking about it, to be honest. I just knew we were playing a really good, athletic team. The main thing that motivated me was the first time I went one for 12. I remember every shot I took, and I remember it like it was yesterday. So, that was the main motivation for me to just go out there play my game and try to produce."

On today's win:

"The funny thing was right before I was shooting my free throw, one of the refs came up to me and said, 'wow, you guys decided to play today, huh?' I was like, 'we had to eventually, right?' So today was that day. We came out in the first half and played good offensively and defensively. Second half, a couple spurts were a little lackadaisical on the defensive end. For 40 minutes I feel like we played pretty hard and pretty well."

On the plan to defend Nevada guard Marcus Marshall and forward Cameron Oliver:

"They are both really good players. Oliver hit some tough shots, and Marshall can do the same thing. It's one of the things we feel like going into the game we are going to shut them down. Our main objective is to have a body in front of them at all times and contest all their shots. I feel like we did a good job of that today."

On what the team did differently today:

"Good question. I couldn't tell you. I feel like we were playing a little more unselfish than past games. We were moving the ball pretty well and getting open looks. It goes down to what Coach Fisher and all the other coaches were saying about the past games when we would lose, you have got to go out there and produce. Malik (Pope) got to his spot and was making his shots; Jeremy (Hemsley) and I were making shots, too. It's just one of those things where we got to our spots and we were producing today, and when we do that we are a hard team to beat."

On the game being a statement win with a 6-6 conference record:

"I wouldn't say that, because like you said we are still 6-6. And they are still at the top, or at least close to the top [Nevada]. Either way, at the end of the day they are still at the top and we are still in the middle of the pack. We are still chasing them."

On atmosphere of the game:

"To be honest, I wouldn't say it felt a lot different. Obviously, there were times where we went on runs and the crowd went really loud, so we appreciate that for sure. We love when the crowd supports us. They do a good job if we are struggling or they notice we need a little bit of a boost, they'll try to give us that boost of energy."

On MW tournament coming up:

"Day by day, practice by practice, and game by game. Staying consistent, not looking too far ahead, and don't be satisfied with one win. When we go to practice we have to focus on the specific game plan for the next team. And if we do that, it will start to give us momentum toward conference tournament time."

On Valentine Izundu in the starting lineup:

"Speaking for me as a guard, you don't really worry about someone blowing past you per say, because you know they have to deal with Val. I've seen plenty of games where someone blows by us and Val gives us that inside presence. It is hard to finish over him; he is a big man that blocks a lot of shots. That gives us a luxury back there."

On Dakarai Allen's 40 minute game:

"Dakarai does everything for us. He is a leader on our team. He is our best defender. He goes out there and plays 40 minutes tonight, and guarded their best player. He is important to us, and he did a great job."

San Diego State forward Malik Pope**On the start of the game:**

"Honestly, I was just following coach Fisher's advice and just playing lower. I think that's really all I had to do. I usually play really high and I don't get on-balance shots. I think that summed it up on how I started today. Just playing lower, getting ready to shoot, concentrating."

On his thoughts on Trey Kell reaching 1,000 career points:

"I enjoyed it. I enjoyed watching every point and I congratulate him. That's a big achievement."

On SDSU turnovers and protecting the lead:

"Being a third-year (player) for the both of us, you kind of learn to be calm in those situations. The game can turn around. We all just huddled up together and take it easy, slow down and don't rush. That's really what it came down to. We couldn't let them speed us up. They started to play aggressive when things weren't going their way, basically. We picked that out and moved forward with that."

On playing slow versus playing fast:

"There is a time for everything. It was getting a little late in the game when they started playing aggressive, so that's usually when you got to slow down and run some clock and play smart. I prefer to get up and down. I love that style of play, but at that moment, that's what we had to do."

On crowd atmosphere during the game:

"Personally, we just focus on winning the game. I did look in the stands and it was a nice environment. Honestly, I enjoyed it. To the fans that did come: thank you. It was fun."

Nevada head coach Eric Musselman**Opening statement:**

"Give San Diego State a lot of credit; they played harder, they played tougher, shot the ball really well. Defensively we weren't very good; lack of depth hurt us again today and I thought at the end of the (first) half the game was changed by (San Diego State forward Matt) Shrigley. But, (I'm) just disappointed in our last two road games, the way we played. So we just have to try to get better the next game and you have to tip your hat to San Diego State. Our starters have got to play better basketball and it is what it is."

On the team's mentality as a team near the top of the Mountain West standings:

"We keep telling them teams are going to come and play better against us, they're gunning for us, and they don't understand that. Maybe one day they will, but they don't right now. All we can do is keep trying to coach and put them in a position, but you know obviously they don't understand it . . . it's easy last year when people aren't gunning for you and all of a sudden we climb and scratch and get ourselves in a good position and they can't handle it, and they don't know how hard it is to win on a nightly basis down the stretch. I do – they don't – so we'll keep preaching and keep trying to educate, keep trying to motivate."

On the efforts of both teams:

"They played harder than us, they played tougher than us, for sure, and we didn't play intelligent basketball, either."

Nevada senior guard D.J. Fenner

On Nevada's performance and mindset heading into the game:

"It was a tough one, obviously, but I have to tip my hat to San Diego State, they're very well coached, they do their job, and they showed it tonight. We came into this game not worrying about their record; we know how good they are and they showed it tonight, and we didn't step up to the challenge."

On San Diego State's performance:

"They look like the team I'm used to playing, for sure. I think what surprised me the most was the high field goal percentage they shot. They're obviously not known for their offense, their defense is where it's at; but you could tell their defense was leading to offense, making it much easier for them."

Nevada sophomore guard/forward Jordan Caroline

On what San Diego State did defensively:

"I thought it was more of us; they went to the zone to start us of, and we didn't just cut and move. At the end of the first half they went on a 7-0 run and that's really when things kind of got out of hand and we just never got over the hump to get back in it."

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