

GEICO Players Era Men's Championship

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

MGM Grand Garden Arena

San Diego State Aztecs
Coach Brian Dutcher
BJ Davis

Reese Dixon-waters

Postgame Press Conference

San Diego State - 97, Oregon - 80

BRIAN DUTCHER: Just real proud of our ability to bounce back after a tough loss to a really good Michigan team. To come out and play with such passion and confidence, that's the two things I put on the board. Play with passion because you can't do anything great unless you do it with passion, and play with confidence, because I know we're a good team.

We shot the ball unbelievably today. These two guys up here, Reese and BJ, made hard shots, made timely shots, and I don't know the last time -- I can't believe we shot 67% from the field in a long, long time, if ever in my head coaching tenure here.

Proud of our effort, and happy we get to play again tomorrow. We'll get back, get some sleep, get up in the morning and start prepping again for I believe we have Baylor tomorrow at 7:30.

Q. Reese, 22 points tonight. Just after going 1 for 7 against Michigan the night prior, what did you see on the floor tonight as far as production?

REESE DIXON-WATERS: I think a lot of it's just my confidence. Obviously we have a game plan for different defenses we play against, but for a scorer, for somebody like me, my confidence is everything. Today -- or yesterday obviously I didn't have that great of a game offensively, but I just had to bounce back and not even think about it today and just play as if that game yesterday didn't happen.

Q. The score that goes in right before the half, just tell



me about what that kind of meant to the team to go into the halftime and be able to be on top by ten?

REESE DIXON-WATERS: Yeah, I think it always helps to get a good shot or get a big shot before the half and extend the lead. Just proud of my team the way we responded from yesterday. It shows growth in our team and maturity. I hope we bring the same attitude coming into tomorrow.

Even though we won today, for me the game is over with, so I'm already thinking about tomorrow.

Q. For both BJ and Reese, in the first half Oregon did a really good job kind of staying with you guys shooting the ball, going 51% from the field, 53% from three. In the second half you guys limited them to 30% from the field and 33% from three. Do you think your guys' pace and physicality just wore on them?

REESE DIXON-WATERS: I think we stuck to the game plan. I think we did a really good job at understanding the defense was going to win us this game, and obviously rebounding as well. Obviously we had our shots falling, so definitely think us being physical bothered them a little bit.

But it was a fun game.

BJ DAVIS: Yeah, I think we just honed in a little more in the second half defensively And forced them to shoot a lower percentage. So credit to the coaches and how they put us in position to go out there and be successful.

BRIAN DUTCHER: To be honest, Bittle didn't play much, and he was dynamic in the first half. He got injured. I don't know what it was, but them not having him in the game definitely hurt their offensive production.

Q. For both players and then I have one for BJ, you lose by 40. No one wants to lose by 40, right? You come out and step on the floor and see that they just beat a ranked Auburn team by 30. Does that kind of ease things up a little bit and say it wasn't all us, it was they're pretty darn good?

REESE DIXON-WATERS: No, not at all. We actually had that talk before the game. You know, Dutch was telling us just because I think Auburn was losing earlier, that doesn't mean anything to us because at the end of the day it's



about how we perform. It doesn't make it any better at all.

BJ DAVIS: Yeah, I agree. Same thing Reese said. It doesn't make it no better, but Coach told us we got to go out and perform every night, and that's our job, so that's what we got to do.

Q. Then for you, BJ, obviously new role for you coming off the bench. These last two games you've provided a spark. Do you feel like that's starting to become your role now to give some offensive energy when you get into the game?

BJ DAVIS: I mean, if that's what's required for winning, then yeah. I kind of try not to be so solely focused on offensively -- offensive production. I pride myself on defense and that being my why I'm out there to play defense rather than score the ball.

BRIAN DUTCHER: We started him the second half because we thought he did the best job on Shelstad. That's no disrespect to Taj not playing the second half. We thought BJ with his quickness and speed gave us a better opportunity to try to rein him in a little bit.

Q. You scored 54 points against Michigan and 51 in the first half tonight. Was that just getting better looks, or were the shots just falling tonight?

BRIAN DUTCHER: You know, we got pretty good looks for Reese against Michigan and Bird. The looks that he made tonight he missed against Michigan, they were the same looks. So at some level I watched enough basketball, when players make shots, everything is easier.

He had the exact same shots, but they wouldn't fall for him, and so that's not saying that Michigan is better than Oregon or Oregon is better than Michigan. It's just some nights when he's on and he was on tonight, there's very little anyone can do about it. So he was on tonight, and he was off against Michigan.

Hopefully he has more on nights than off nights moving forward.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach?

Q. If you could just speak a little bit more about the response of your team, you know, to come back from what was statistically the worst loss in the Fisher-Dutcher era or more lopsided loss and to have this kind of response?

BRIAN DUTCHER: I don't think Fisher going to put that in his era. He'll put that on me.

So, yeah, we got hammered. I like the way the team responded. It's like we're making shots. I mean, when I say we had some of those same looks against Michigan, it's a different defensive game plan, but Reese had some good looks against Michigan. Some of the looks he had today were good too, but they were made. He made hard shots. He's a hard shot maker.

So when he's making it and then BJ makes them and LZ comes in and he's making them and Heide is 4 for 4, and you just -- you are playing a game like this, the rim looks the size of the ocean. Everything you throw up there you think is going in.

We did a really good job making shots. Then Oregon was more physical than us around the basket. We gave too many second-chance opportunities. We fouled so much in the second half. I think the fouls were 12 or 12-2 at one point in the second half. That wasn't the officiating. It was the way they were hammering us inside. They were falling too much.

So we made an adjustment, did a better job down the stretch not fouling and taking care of the ball and came out with 22 assists, which has got to be a season high and played a really solid basketball game.

Q. Yesterday as we have all said, Michigan dominated you guys on the boards, and today going up against Oregon, who yesterday beat Auburn on the boards despite losing by 11, you guys outrebound Oregon by eight tonight. How much of that was positioning and just getting back to fundamentals?

BRIAN DUTCHER: We were trying to box Michigan out. They're just big and strong, and they reach over you. That was what we were concerned with Bittle doing, and obviously he didn't play much the second half. I think he might have got a possession or two, and then he couldn't go anymore. That gave us an opportunity to have a better chance of securing the rebound, not have him in there with all that length and size. We took advantage of that as best we could, and I don't think we rebounded as well as we should on the defensive end.

Q. As you mentioned, you started BJ Davis in the second half because you said he did a better job on Shelstad and though he was doing a good job. Taj has struggled with the start of the year. How do you keep Taj's confidence up as a starter?

BRIAN DUTCHER: Taj is a very good player, but BJ is a quicker athlete. So we get on these quick point guards, it's asking a lot of Taj to guard these guys. He puts everything



into it, but sometimes they're just quicker than he is. He's stronger and bigger, but quickness matters sometimes too.

BJ gave us some quickness off the bench to guard in the second half.

That doesn't mean Taj isn't trying. It's just that when you got a 6'4" guard on a 6-foot guard that's quick, that's hard on him. So that's no disrespect to Taj or his ability. It's just that's a hard position to guard.

I can't put Byrd or Reese on him either. In the past last year when I played BJ at the two guard and I played Nick Boyd, I still put BJ on the point guard even though Nick was the point guard. I put BJ on that guy a lot.

It's asking a lot of those bigger guards to guard a quick point guard.

Q. What does this do for a team? You had lost two straight, and I know a lot of fans were probably doubting you, but what does it do for a team when you have a win like this in this situation to take all the pressure off and you can just relax and go on about with the season?

BRIAN DUTCHER: Yeah, I mean, any coach here that's sitting here is going, I don't want to be one of the teams that goes 0-3, because they're going to be a really good basketball team here that's going to go 0-3. You get the first win, and now we'll try to go 2-1, like we were last year in the event.

It gives us an opportunity, and as much as it feels good to win, I told them last night, when we walk out of this arena, we're not going to talk about Michigan and we're not going to think about Michigan, we're not going to discuss it again. It's over.

The only way we can win tonight is to think about Oregon. So we're not going to watch film on Michigan. We're not going to analyze the game. We're going to move to Oregon. I'll tell them the same thing. As good as we played, when we walk out of the building, we play tomorrow night. All our focus will be on Baylor. We won't sit there and show film of tonight's game and talk about all the great things, because you have to have the same talk when it's good and when it's bad.

We will forget this game as soon as we walk out of here and start preparing for a good Baylor team.

Q. Magoon Gwath coming off the knee surgery, coming off the injury, has been playing around 20 minutes a night the last three games. Is he still on minutes restriction, or are the minutes going to grow

as the time goes on here?

BRIAN DUTCHER: He's not on a restriction right now. It's just getting his game shape back and timing. You know, it's not going to come right away. Early in the second half I think it was at the 17 minute mark we took him out because you ask him, you look fatigued already. He said, yeah, I could use one right now. We have to watch him closely and make sure we don't wear him out up and down the floor where he fatigues and all of a sudden he gets a couple of fouls because we've left him in too long.

As the season goes on, he'll play himself into game shape, but you only get there by playing games. He's on the right path, but he's still getting fatigued early in the games.

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