

UC San Diego vs. No. 28 Cal State L.A. Quotes, Mar. 16, 2013

Head Coach Eric Newman

On the Tritons' pitching this series:

"I was really happy with the way our arms performed all weekend. Even Trevor (Scott) yesterday (Friday night) really gutted out five innings for us. We made some pretty fatal mistakes behind him in that first (seven-run) inning that cost him a lot of runs, but he didn't give up. He didn't quit pitching. He gave us four really quality innings after that, which saved our bullpen, and gave us an opportunity to save some guys for today and really get the job done. I thought going all the way back to (Ryan) Goodbrand (on Thursday night), and then today (Blake) Fassler and (Troy) Cruz, were fantastic. We're really happy with how things turned out."

On the decision to put Troy Cruz on the mound to start:

"We made this decision last week after the Sonoma (State) series. We felt like our bullpen just needed to get shored up, so to do that, we needed to move some of our better arms, guys that had been starting for us, into the pen, so we moved (Justin) Rahn and (Dan) Kolodin into the bullpen and more of the backside, which gave us a little bit more ability to match up with teams. To do that, though, we had to move somebody into the rotation, and Troy was the obvious choice because of how he had pitched, and just his stuff and competitiveness."

On Troy Cruz:

"He's a born leader. He really is. You can see it. Teammates love him. Nothing's ever too big for him. The moment just is never too big for him. He just seems like he's very comfortable, whether it be starting, closing, being in an at-bat, with two strikes and a couple of guys on base. Nothing is ever too big for him. He just knows how to play the game. He knows how to compete."

On UCSD's defensive performance:

"We played great defense. We pitched well. They went hand in hand. We only gave up four free bases all day today. That's the key to winning games. When you don't give up free bases and you make the other team earn everything, you're going to win a lot. In the three games we won, we gave up less than five free bases. In the one game we lost, we gave up 10. It's not even any more complicated than that, really."

On the importance of this series victory:

"That was huge for us, especially going into finals, drawing back to .500 in conference and getting a little momentum. We have 10 conference home games (left). It's always fun to play at home. You always get a good feel for playing at home, and I think this team is ready to make a little run."

Junior Catcher/DH Nick La Face

On this being a big series victory for the Tritons:

"Yeah, definitely. They were a good team. They had a great record coming in, and we had been struggling a little bit, so to get three out of four was big for us."

On his offensive output in the series:

"It's no secret that I was struggling early on (this season), but I've just continued working and tried not to get upset or frustrated, knowing that there are a lot more opportunities. I just had to stick with it and keep working hard. I simplified things at the plate a little bit, and not so much cared about any results or anything, but just trying to hit the ball hard."

On Troy Cruz:

"Troy's great. It's pretty special for a guy to come in in his first year and have such an impact. He's a sparkplug for us, and he can do so many things. He can pitch for us, come out of the bullpen, start, play a good second base and swing the bat well. It's great having him. It's great playing with him."

Junior RHP Blake Fassler

On his performance in the game-one win:

"I felt like our team gave us some momentum last (Friday) night, getting seven runs in that ninth inning. We definitely had good momentum coming into this (doubleheader). All I honestly try to do is attack hitters, and basically execute whatever (catcher Nick La) Face puts down (for signs). I just try to attack."

On his progression this season, through three weeks in the starting rotation:

"It's been going alright. My mechanics are alright and my stuff is pretty good. I think my stuff was better last week (at Sonoma State) than this week, but I keep battling. You have to battle through everything and just keep working."

Freshman Infielder/RHP Troy Cruz

On when he was made aware that he would make his first start on the mound:

"Actually, it was last week, after our series in Sonoma. (Head coach Eric Newman) told me that we were going to shake things up in the rotation a little bit, and that I would (start) one of the games. I was then able to prepare throughout the week."

On his starting pitching experience at nearby Bonita Vista High School:

"I primarily started, but I would come in and close some games for them, too."

On his mindset warming up for the second game, with a series win on the line:

"I just knew we had the momentum, from Friday night, (when) we scored seven runs in the last inning. That gave us momentum, and then Blake (Fassler) threw a fantastic game (one) for us, and our offense came out in the first game today. I knew we had the momentum, and I knew that we had that little bit of an edge there going into that second game."

On the importance of the two first-inning runs in that nightcap:

"(They were) very important. I became confident that my offense was going to put up some runs, and that allowed me to settle down a lot."