



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### San Diego State - Brigham Young Postgame Quotes Saturday, November 30, 2019

#### Head Coach Rocky Long:

##### **Opening statement:**

"It's great to win. It's great to have nine wins on your record and we're looking forward to the bowl game. BYU is a very good football team and they are a class act. So any chance you have to play them, you know you're going to get their best and we gave our best tonight. I guess we made our field goals and they missed theirs, so we actually won the game."

##### **On the defense holding BYU to three points when they averaged 30 coming into the game:**

"Now that the regular season is over, I think our defense has played as well as any defense I've been around, and in the ten years I've been here, that's by far the best defensive performance when you count the first game to the last game."

I don't know what it's going to look like statistically because we gave up about a hundred yards on that last drive but if you look national statistics, I believe we are in the Top-25 (national rankings) in about eight or ten categories of defense.

After 12 games, that's a pretty amazing thing. The teams that we play score a whole bunch of points normally and we're in the top two or three in scoring defense and top 10 nationally in total defense. Our players have to be commended for playing that well.

##### **On his initial concerns with the defense front coming into the season and if his concerns were the catalyst for the team's success this season:**

"No, I think it's all of them (the defense) together. In fact, I was frustrated throughout the last two games that we gave pressure on the quarterback and then he would scramble out of the coverage and get big yardage. Our defensive linemen need to learn how to squeeze the pocket instead of just running right by those quarterbacks."

But, the defensive line played better than we probably expected or anybody else expected, too. The secondary was really good tonight and we have the best defensive player in the league in Kyahva (Tezino). I don't know if he's going to get it, but they are making a mistake if he's not the MW Defensive Player of the Year.

##### **On improvements from the secondary during BYU's final offensive drive:**

"I think they did a nice job of keeping guys in front of them and when they (receivers) tried to go over the top of them, the secondary made some nice plays. When you play as good of defense as our guys have played this year, it's very frustrating to let people try to run the clock. But you have to be smarter than your heart tells you to be, so we gave up the yardage and let them run the clock."

**On Tariq Thompson's effect on defense and his explosive plays that caused turnovers:**

"We were really lucky on the first one. He made a really good play. We all-out blitzed them and we blew up coverage and there was a guy running down the middle of the field with nobody covering him. They ran two trick plays, one of them worked, and one of them didn't."

"We blitzed everybody and they (BYU) didn't have enough people to block everybody, so Tariq didn't get blocked. When they (BYU) then threw the flea-flicker, it gave Tariq just enough time to get there and hit the quarterback. If the quarterback would have had time (to make the pass), it would have been about a 70-yard touchdown pass. We took a chance and Tariq made a really good play and got there before the guy could throw it."

**On Carson Baker's first collegiate performance:**

"I thought it was okay. I didn't know what to expect. I thought he had handled himself confidently. He didn't look like he got frustrated. He didn't look like he got off-kilter. He stayed in the game. He did what he could. He made a couple of really good throws. He made a good throw before halftime and then a nice throw down the sidelines where the receivers went up and caught the ball. But, he put it up where they could catch it and the defensive back couldn't make a play."

"For the first time out and never playing in a college football game, he played really, really well. Hopefully that's a sign he's going to be a good quarterback."

**On playing Jordon Brookshire:**

"We thought Carson was doing just fine – but (Jordon) Brookshire played. He didn't play the whole series, but he went in there for a couple running plays."

**On his thoughts on the team's season:**

"We play one more game; we could win, we could lose. I thought some of the comments about us winning eight games, and that it wasn't good enough, that was ridiculous. Any time you win eight or nine games, you ought to be celebrating. The people that don't celebrate that, they must have a real sad life."

**On if there is meaning to him if the team were to win 10 games:**

"Yeah. It's another win."

**Redshirt freshman quarterback Carson Baker:****On his first collegiate start:**

"It felt good. I think the coaches did a really good job of keeping my nerves down, keeping me in the game and focused and it felt good to play football again. It was really fun."

**On satisfaction of winning for the seniors on Senior Night:**

"For guys like this (Parker Houston) who put everything in this program, done everything for this team, we did it for them. The defense played terrific tonight. The seniors on the defense played really well, and our ultimate goal was to get a win for them so felt really good."

**On how this game helps prepare him for the Aztecs' upcoming bowl game:**

"It was good for me to get my first snaps. It was good for me to get some experience leading into the bowl game. Now we have some time to practice, prepare — but I think this (experience) is definitely going to help."

**On performance of receivers:**

"The receiving corps (and I) talked all week about we want to throw the ball. Jesse (Matthews), Kobe (Smith), all of them (SDSU's receiver) made some amazing plays for me. I can not be thankful enough for them."

**Senior tight end Parker Houston:****On emotions of Senior Night:**

"A lot of emotions walking out that tunnel before the game. After we sang the fight song, I just looked back at everything one last time and soaked it all in."

**On outlook of seniors after final game at SDCCU:**

"Right now, it's all joy, high spirits and hopefully it doesn't hit us till we get home, maybe can ride this one (win) a little longer."

**Senior linebacker Kyahva Tezino:****On holding BYU to only 3 points:**

"(We're) just unstoppable. It's a very emotional moment for the whole team to have the seniors, the ones who put in the most work, to see the younger guys step up so big for us. I thank all the younger dudes for making this happen, making me go out the right way (at home) and I'm sure we're going to go to the bowl game and do something special."

**On processing his emotions surrounding senior night:**

"It's an emotional moment. I'm probably going to cry in the locker room. These past five years, it's been a great ride for me. The football team, San Diego State as a whole, I don't know how I'm going to replace it. I love hanging out with these guys. I love working out, giving my sweat, blood, and tears every single day. It's going to be hard to replace that. I'm glad I made the decision to come here and everything worked out the way I wanted it to."

**On if the seniors had discussions with the team before the game:**

"I feel like the seniors and the whole team now what was at stake coming in here. We had nothing to lose. It was just us going out there and having fun and doing something we love. I just told everyone before the game in our little pregame speech, 'I love you guys. We have got to end this on the right note.' I know we're not going to the conference championship, but we have to make the best of our opportunities and we did the best we could. I'm happy it ended this way. As a defense, you have to be proud to hold them (BYU) to three points."

**On the success of the program during his tenure:**

"It's been very successful. Since I got here as a freshman, we have been winning at least seven or eight games a season, so it's just been a great opportunity to be on this team and to go to a bowl game every year. A lot of players don't do that. I'm just so grateful for these guys on the team and came in every single day wanting to come to work, get better and on the field. And you see (because of it) we're playing lights-out. I just thank God and I just thank them (his teammates) for always being there for me."

**On his words to Carson Baker after his first start:**

"Big shout-out to him. He stepped up for us, not just for the team as a whole, but the seniors as a whole. We needed someone to step up and he stepped up big. He played great. He played his role very well and when his name was called, he seized the moment. I'm

sure his future is bright from here.”

### **Junior safety Tariq Thompson:**

#### **On his emotions after his strip sack/forced fumble/fumble recovery:**

“It feels great but there’s 11 men on the field. I’m one person doing my job. The other ten players did their job every play. We held the team to three points. That’s a great defensive effort. My teammates, they give me more confidence and energy to make plays. I thank them for their efforts.”

#### **On Kyahva Tezino’s effect on the defense as a leader:**

“My freshman year, he stepped into the lineup, I think it was against Fresno State, and from there he gave us energy the whole year. He’s just one of those big brothers for you, so you look up to him. He makes plays every game, and when he makes a play, he gives everybody energy. He never gets too hard on anybody. He tries to make plays, give us energy and he’s a great leader off the field. He’s a great man, loves God, and is just a great person and that’s why we (the defense) love him so much.

“Kyahva is the reason we go to these bowl games and have these great seasons. He’s a great guy and great teammate. I can’t say much more, he’s just that guy on and off the field.”

#### **On BYU’s second-to-last offensive drive and what it says about the SDSU defense:**

“I want to say we just want the ball more. We came out, wanting to shut them out and we gave up three, but we said we’re not going to give them a touchdown. (Luq) Barcoo, Trenton (Thompson), Taylor (Hawkins), Dwayne (Johnson Jr.), Rashad Scott, all the other players on the defense, the secondary, practice together every day. We try to hold the offense to nothing. But without the offense giving us a hard time in practice, we probably wouldn’t be able to do the stuff we do in the game. Shout out to the whole team.

#### **On his and the defense’s confidence throughout the year:**

“We believe in ourselves and we believe in each other. I felt like if I’m not going to make a play, (Luq) Barcoo, Trenton (Thompson), Taylor (Hawkins), Dwayne (Johnson Jr.), Rashad (Scott)—one of them are going to make a play. We all trust each other. It’s just one of those things where you know somebody else is going to make a play if you don’t make a play. We hold each other to that standard.”

#### **On what he has to say to Carson Baker after his first start:**

“That’s my guy. I told him to be calm and cool.”

### **BYU Head Coach Kalani Sitake:**

#### **On the team’s missed kicks and his overall thoughts on his team’s play:**

It’s all blocks. We didn’t anticipate that happening, but what it really comes down to is being able to put points on the board on offense. They made their kicks and we didn’t make ours. They caused turnovers we didn’t, so that was the difference today. Congratulations to San Diego State. This was a defensive battle and I’ve got to do a better job in getting our guys to score more points.

(The game) was definitely slower than I wanted because we had to get two scores (at the end) and that’s something that I wasn’t happy with obviously, but that I wasn’t happy with a lot of things from the last 60 minutes that we watched. There are some good things when we look at the stats. We got way more yards and more first downs but they just got more points. We turned the ball over and made this a special teams battle. On offense, we weren’t able to put points on the board. So that’s what I’ll get fixed and it’s my job as head coach and get that right.

#### **On his team’s inability to finish drives throughout the game:**

"Tonight was a that's not indicative of what we can do. So whatever the answer (to finishing drives) is, we'll find it and make sure that we perform better. I thought defensively the guys did well. I thought San Diego State took care of the ball, didn't take a lot of risks, and we were unable to capitalize when they got their chances. We've just got to go home and get back to work.

**On how quarterback Zack Wilson's play tonight:**

"All I care about is winning and none of us played well enough to win. So, I'm probably disappointed in everyone, including myself. That's where we'll start first and we'll have to get control the field goal kicking. It's been a struggle this last half of the season. We thought Jake (Oldroyd) had won the position from the competition last week and obviously it didn't pan out.

**On if there was ever a point where he thought about going with a different quarterback:**

"No, not really. I think that that's something that we always evaluate as we go throughout the season. But you know, we were moving the ball. We just weren't scoring points. I really don't care how we do it. We need to put more points on the board and get more touchdowns instead of field goal attempts."

**On what will be the first thing he will work on in preparation for the bowl game:**

"Yeah, just trying to win the football game and being able to get more points on the board. That's going to be the first thing. We have one more game for our seniors and it's an opportunity for us to get better. We have a lot of practices to use to get our guys better and we'll work on that. I felt like there are a lot of guys that played really well tonight."

**On the play of San Diego State:**

"I thought they did a good job with the quarterback being really safe with the ball. I think they ran a lot of max protection and things like that. They were able to pick and choose when they wanted to run or pass, but I thought first down-wise we limited the number of first downs we gave up. That drive at the end of the half, that hurt. We should have had a different linebacker there. We've done it over and over for the whole entire year and that was one of those moments where we missed an opportunity to make that pick. That's one of a lot of things that we can evaluate and work to get better. I think San Diego State should be given a lot of credit for the game plan. They got the turnovers, made the most out of them and that played a big part of the total score.

**On what he told his team after the game:**

"'Keep your head up heads up and believe in each other and this will make our team closer.' You know, we're not going let this divide our team. I told them jst believe in each other and love each other and we'll learn from this and get better. We have to say goodbye to these seniors and the best way to do it is with a win. We've got to move on (from this loss) but we got can't just move on and forget about this game. We have to learn from it. I think that's really important for us to get closer and for us to learn and get better."

**OUTSIDE LINEBACKER ISAIAH KAUFUSI**

**On losing the regular season finale after having won the last five games:**

"It's disappointing to lose in general. It's not fun to lose. It's frustrating to lose and we had some really frustrating losses this year, especially at Toledo and South Florida. All losses are frustrating.

**On the disappointment of only giving up 13 points and still losing:**

"I'm really disappointed in myself. I made a lot of mistakes and things that I could have cleaned up. As a defense we were pretty disappointed. We only gave up 13 points, which is should be okay, but we had zero turnovers, you know, and those are the things that really can change games. They forced three turnovers in the game."