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5500 CAMPANILE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92182 | (619) 594-5547

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## **San Diego State Football Press Conference Quotes**

**Oct. 10, 2023**

**San Diego, Calif.**

### **Head Coach Brady Hoke**

#### **Opening Statement:**

"Number one, we have to be resilient. That's what we've talked about as a team. We have to be resilient. Going in having a bye week, sometimes those are good. Sometimes those are bad. You never know. The one thing that's bad about it, you have the bad taste in your mouth of the Air Force game for another week. From that standpoint, both Hawaii and us are coming off of a bye, both teams are two and four. We have six games left that are guaranteed. We have to take each game one at a time, and we want to play more than six. So that's part of it. We've had some adversity, there is no doubt about it, and some of that is self-inflicted. Some of it is just not finishing on things the way we want to finish. Part of that adversity helps you with your mental toughness and that's a big part that we have talked about as a team. We played three of the top five defenses in the country, so you give them credit. We have to get better obviously, but it tells you a little bit about where we're at and who we're playing. We want to correct the performance and the behavior that we have at times out there. That's one thing you do during the bye, you get a chance to self-scout, look into what we're doing and those things and correct the performance that we don't want. I would also say we just have to continue to get better and grow as a football team."

#### **On the biggest challenges that Hawaii presents:**

"Number one, their quarterback is really a good player. Their wide receivers are gifted. Two of them, I think, combined for 68 receptions. They're quick, they run good routes. I think they get the ball out defensively or offensively. Their offense is similar to what you saw in Idaho State. The ball is going to come out fast. We've faced the quarterback three years ago. He's a good football player and does a nice job within the offense. Defensively, typically upfront, they're going to really try and create negative plays. That's one thing that they've shown a little bit. I think statistically some of those lie a little bit. When you look at who they played, they played some pretty good football teams."

#### **On Hawaii's inability to run the ball:**

"I think they'll try and run the ball, I think they always want to try and do that. I think we've got to do a good job of shutting the run game down, and then really focusing on the quarterback and what he can do."

#### **On the Hawaii Quarterback:**

"He can move the pocket, but he's more of a pocket, pro-style quarterback. I've thought he's been good for the last three years, and he's a guy that can move his feet and can get out of the pocket, but he's more of a pro-style quarterback."

**On if he's had two bye weeks so close together before:**

"I haven't. You get the schedule and all that and it is what it is; you're going to play the schedule. Then you see the first bye week and you're all good, that's good timing. Six games right in the middle. Get a little healthy, rest a little bit, get some younger guys a little bit more active to see where they're at. But then you got two games and then you got another bye. That's different for me personally. Bye weeks are funny because I think I told the story when I was at Michigan, we played Northwestern and it was a good year for them. Pat was the linebacker for them and they were playing well and they were tempo. No one else was really running tempo. We thought we had a week off and could really prepare for it. We got our butts kicked. There's a bye week, I think at rest the guys more than anything. I think we had a good bye week and we had a pretty good day yesterday. So, we just got to continue to work and continue to improve as a ballclub."

**On importance of recruiting players from the Hawaii area:**

"There's no doubt, from the kids that we've had here in the past, the ones we have now, and the ones we'll have in the future, I think it's really important. The high school football scene and the dedication to high school football and the love for the islands are really big and so it's important for us."

**Linebacker Cooper McDonald****On the Air Force game and things to fix for this week:**

"We had a great week of preparation but it's football. Anything can happen. So, we just went back to work this past week, watched the film and there were things that needed correction and we're going to correct them for this next game."

**On challenges for the upcoming week:**

"They like to spread their offense out and really let the rock fly. We know that quarterback is a really good thrower. I want to say he's like top five in passing yards in the nation. So, I think just putting pressure on him and just playing the way that we know how. We've been in a little drought defensively so we need to get the ball back for the offense, so they can go down and score. That's going to be a big emphasis this week in practice as well: getting the ball back for offense so they can go down to score."

**On the defensive impact required:**

"The coaches are putting us in great positions to make plays. It's on us now. We need to go out there and make the plays that when the time comes to us, we need to be able to make the play as a whole defense."

**On facing Hawaii:**

"Seeing them on film, they play hard. Their record may not show that, but at the same time they're going into every game and they're going to be ready to play. And I think again, just watching the film, you can see who's playing hard and I can tell you all eleven are playing hard on the offensive side of the ball."

**on Blake's scholarship:**

"He won't brag about himself, but I will. Just seeing him during this fall camp, I noticed that he was making a big impact out there. I was like, this kid's balling, like someone that we need to put on scholarship. And every day he comes to work. He's a vocal leader as well for the offense. When we're going offense versus defense, I can always hear him on their sideline getting them going, so it's well deserved. I don't think I've ever told him that but yeah, it's well deserved."

### **Running back Martin Blake:**

#### **On recently receiving a scholarship:**

"A lot of excitement, I didn't really have words to speak. He just did it so surprisingly. Then just seeing my family, my boys, as I looked up all I saw was nothing but teammates cheering and yelling like it was just as much theirs. And that's what I felt. It was no feeling towards me, I was just looking at my team like these are my brothers. They wanted it just as bad as I did."

#### **On what it took to achieve the scholarship:**

"Just when you work so hard and you see it paying off. And you just give all you got, you expect it. I manifest it like it's going to come, and just keep doing you. Just keep doing you. And then also just the surprise element of when is it going to come, I just keep having good games and it's going to. Just keep having that battle in my head, you just never know when it's going to come but all you can do is control what you can control."

#### **On being overlooked as a walk-on:**

"It was a lot of being overlooked and a lot of 'I gotta prove myself.' I have to show my name that's on my back. I want people to know the name Blake. I want people to know this number 13, or 35 back then. My whole mindset coming in was 'I want to be one of the great running backs that came out of here.'

#### **On the choosing SDSU and the impact Coach Pumphrey had on him:**

"Yeah, Coach Pump: that's my guy. He impacted me. Also just being close to home because of my parents, my dad, and just being able to go home anytime. But DJ Pumphrey for sure. He was one of the big leading ones and just having that figure coming from my school just really pushed me like oh, yeah, I want to be great just like him."

#### **On what it's like to be part of a snap sharing backfield:**

"You have to be ready at any time and any moment having that rotation. I think it really helps the game plan for us, we just get to be a team. Like for instance Hawaii just having that rotation of different backs. You don't know who to prepare against, you can see me but then next thing you've got Cam Davis coming at you and we don't run the same. And that's why I like the rotation as well."

#### **On the difference of playing in Hawai'i:**

"I played in the Hawai'i bowl; it's an experience. I wouldn't say it's different from anything, but it is different. The field is different, even the air is different. Everything's different but at the same time, when you're locked in it's just a game you have to go in there ready."

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