



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### San Diego State Press Conference Quotes Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2019

#### Head Coach Rocky Long

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

"I think there's a chance to be a very exciting game this weekend because Wyoming is the most complete team we've played to this point. They're physical, they run the ball, they stop the run, they rush the passer, they cause turnovers (and) they don't turn the ball over. There as athletic and talented as we are. They're well-coached and play hard. We like to think that's what we do too. Whether we do or not, I don't know, but we'd like to think that's what we do too. It's two teams that have similar philosophies and play the game the same way and it ought to be a really good game."

##### **On what he thought when Wyoming beat Missouri earlier this year:**

"It didn't surprise me a bit. Our league this year is so close from top to bottom. We don't have a dominant team in this league and we don't have any weaklings in the league. And we've proved it by a whole bunch of our teams beat Power 5 teams this year so it didn't surprise me one bit."

##### **On where he wants to see improvement from this team:**

"We can improve on everything, but I'd like to see our offense more consistent. We make some really good plays, but we seem to stall out sometimes. The last game (at Colorado State) we won because our quarterback was throwing it better and our receivers were catching it better. That's a good sign, but we've got to consistently be able to run the ball a little bit better than we have been."

##### **On if the Aztec defense is better than he thought it would be this year:**

"I thought that we played well last week and I take it week-to-week, because there's no reason talking about it until the end of the season."

##### **On if this is the most athletic and fast back (8) he's had here:**

"No, I don't think so. I think it's very similar to some that we've had. We've had a lot of potential NFL guys back there. I don't think this is our most talented team by any means or fastest team by any means."

##### **On if he has any concerns about playing another team coming off a bye week:**

"I don't there's anything you can do to make sure that happens. I think everybody that has a bye week has a real advantage. They get themselves healthy, they get themselves fresh. Their players are going to be excited about playing. Yesterday we kind of had a hangover since we didn't get home until 4 something in the morning. Our players weren't really energetic yesterday. They didn't practice very well yesterday and I promise you that Wyoming practiced well yesterday because they had the whole week off. They're excited about playing another game. They're rested. They had some guys hurt in their last game, which if you look at the score they smashed UNLV. They had several of their good players hurt. Now I've read that all their good players are healthy and fresh, and it's the healthiest Wyoming team that's getting ready to play us. I think there's huge advantages to the team that has been on the bye week. I thought we had a huge advantage last week (against Colorado State) coming off a bye week."

**On if he saw that San Diego State received two votes in the Coaches Poll:**

"We did? I do have some thoughts. I'm surprised. I vote, but I didn't vote for us."

**On if he had ever seen anything like Luq Barcoo did with three interceptions in three straight plays vs. Colorado State:**

"Never. I've been lucky enough to have been in a couple games where a guy had three interceptions for the game, but not back-to-back-to-back. That's very unusual, I'm sure."

**On the secondary's play and ability to force turnovers so far this season:**

"I think our whole team is inconsistent. They did that all last week (at Colorado State) but the week before (vs. Utah State) we didn't cause any turnovers, so we might have won the game (if they forced a turnover). Every week is a new experience and, I keep saying this, when you play in our league right now, the athletic ability and effort of the players is so close no matter who you play. All you've got to do is look at the teams that our league beat this year and you can figure out that this league is tough from top to bottom. (The) athletic abilities are about equal so every week is a new experience. Last week we won because our defense caused all those turnovers and gave our offense some help. The week before that we lost because the defense didn't cause any turnovers and didn't help our offense."

**On where he would compare this defense to past defenses at San Diego State:**

"We're not even halfway through the season yet. You can't tell if we're any good on defense yet or not. I think our defense has played well last week."

**On Wyoming's rushing offense:**

"I call it that they're in a wildcat (offense) all the time, because their quarterback, who can actually throw the ball very well, too, is a big, strong guy that they use in their running game quite a bit. More so than most (teams) use them in the running game and that's because he's a big, strong, talented runner with the ball. So every time he's back in the shotgun, there's a real chance that he'll be the guy carrying the football and what that does is give you one extra blocker. That makes it more difficult to stop the run, which nobody has stopped the run against them yet or even slowed them down. The last game they were at 374 yards rushing. Any time teams throw in a wildcat and they put a tailback back there in shotgun like the quarterback position they have a huge advantage because they have an extra blocker. The difference is you see that come into the game. You know what's going to happen when it comes into the game so you can call the defense accordingly. Well, when the quarterback is their normal quarterback and they're running those plays with a normal quarterback it doesn't give you any advantages on defense. In fact, it puts you at a huge disadvantage. You don't know if he's going to hand it (off), you don't know if he's going to throw it or if he's going to be the tailback. It gives them all kinds of advantages and puts you at a real disadvantage."

**Senior running back Juwan Washington****On his lingering ankle injury and next hurdles to overcome during recovery:**

"Just being more comfortable. I think the toughest part of coming back from an injury is that, in your mind, you feel like it was before (the injury). You just have to get back to where you can do everything, where it's instinctive, and you're not thinking about it."

**On the challenges of Wyoming's defense:**

"They are kind of used to it like we are used to it. They go against their offense in practice and we go against our defense in practice. Being physical is something they are not shying away from; they are going to come downhill and bring all 11 guys to the ball. I think we need to be sound with our techniques and make some plays when we get the opportunity."

**On playing against the SDSU defense in practice:**

"It's tough. You do not realize how good they are in the offseason just because they are the regular guys we see everyday, we hang out with them. But when it gets to the season time, you really get to see how good they are. It's a shock to you. But when they have the No. 1 run defense in the nation and - we (the offense) run the ball a lot - we get to pick up a few yards here and there in practice, so I feel better about it now as I look back and see how much we did in the offseason against them."

### **On the impact of Kyahva Tezino on the Aztecs' defense and his appraisal of Tezino as a roommate:**

"The main thing with Kyhava is just being an example for everyone else. He is going to be the star to stop for the defense, if he's going out there and has a lot of energy. I think they (the defense) feed off of him. That's what I think he does the best each and every game. He leads them (the defense) on and off the field and everyone knows that there is a high standard they have to come up to. As a roommate, it's almost the same thing. I never have been late to any workouts or anything like that because Kyhava is my roommate. He is always knocking on my door in the morning, making sure we get up and are ready to go. Always being goofy and stuff. It's been fun living with him and playing on the field with him."

### **On Luq Barcoo's three-interception performance at Colorado State:**

"I have never seen that, first time that I had ever seen that (three picks in a game). Especially playing on the same team as someone, I've probably seen some highlights, but especially being on offense, you get the ball right back and it almost comes as a shock to you because you're sitting on the bench, discussing what things you want to see on the next series and all of the sudden everyone around you is cheering and you have the ball back. It's like, 'Dang, we didn't even get a break,' but it was kind of cool to see him perform like. I think at the beginning of the game, I told him, 'Hey Barcoo, I need one,' and he got me three."

### **Senior linebacker Kyahva Tezino**

#### **On the challenges of Wyoming's offense:**

"They are going to, kind of like us, run the ball, and they are not going to stop running the ball. If we know the play, they are going to do it anyway. It's probably the thing they do most similar to us — we are going to run it, and we don't care if you know we're going to run it. They just want us to stop it. So it's going to be a good game for our defense, and I just can't wait for it to happen."

#### **On how he has helped Juwan Washington through his injury:**

"I did a couple things for him, he probably won't admit it, but mostly I just always kept him up, kept him in good spirits, tried to encourage him always because it's a hard deal dealing with an injury when you just want to play football. I prayed for him a lot, I had my family pray for him to get back and have a quick recovery."

#### **On the Aztec defense and its potential:**

"I still think we are better than where we are, honestly. I feel like that we can just get so much better and our ability to get so much better is just out the window. We still have guys that are still developing, still coming along, so if we just put that all together, we are going to be a scary defense."

#### **On his confidence level on the field and work he has put into his play:**

"I have been putting in a lot of work. In the offseason, I was in San Diego, trying to bond with my teammates and get them comfortable because the way we played last year was not up to our standards. In every game, I am always nervous, I'm not just that confident guy. I always go into the game nervous with butterflies because you never know what is going to happen and you never know how you will perform. You just want to perform the best way that you can because everyone else is looking up to you as a leader. So you have to go out there and do your part and play the best that you can play."

#### **On loss of Kyree Woods and the effect on him and the team:**

"We preach next man up, but losing Kyree was a hard deal. When I heard the news, it was just kind of hard for me to even eat because that's just one of my brothers. For him to go down as a senior, he obviously is a leader in the backend of the defense, so just for him to go down I think that pretty much hurt the team, seeing one person go down that means so much to the team and put in so much work for the team. It was a hard deal, but next man up is what we preach and I'm sure the next man is going to be great."

#### **On keys of the Aztec defense and keeping opponents out of the end zone:**

"The philosophy we have, that's one of our philosophies, is to keep them out of the end zone. We have been preaching that since the offseason and I think our team really took to it, keep them out of the endzone, no matter what, no matter how. Even if it's like that drive against Colorado State, a 97-yard drive, we have to chunk it down and just stop them."