



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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San Diego State Football Press Conference Quotes

Aug. 29, 2023

San Diego, Calif.

Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening statement:

"Number one, thanks for being here. It's good to win obviously; it's fun and a lot better on Sunday when you win. We played a good football team. I think they'll probably win 10 games again in the MAC at least and I think they're well coached and physical. I really want to thank the students. Our students were awesome, and I thank them for being there and coming out. With that being said, we tell the truth on Mondays, and we've got to get better as a football team and we've got to get better in some areas that we'll talk about. But as you review the film, you look at some missed assignments in there. We got to make sure that we're finishing on the ball defensively. We won the fourth quarter, which was huge. We go back to a couple games last year that we didn't did not finish in the fourth quarter. So that's always going to be big for us. We did a good job protecting the ball, just had the one turnover. Then our defense did a nice job getting the ball back so we're plus two in turnover margin. They [Ohio] were plus-12 throughout the season so that was a big emphasis for us. We played with pretty good discipline. We just had the one penalty that cost seven points basically on Cody. I'll be honest with you, I send in calls that I think are questionable. They do a really good job of getting back to us and I can see their point on throwing the flag and I can see not throwing the flag but it was too bad because Marcus did a great job. A true freshman, 103 yards, he would like to have that as something he did. But overall we didn't have any real mistakes, and that was really good. We got to be more physical in the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball. I think we played a lot of guys defensively up front as we try to figure that rotation out, but we have to play better and be more physical on the line of scrimmage. Christian Jones, for his first start at left tackle, I really thought he played well. I think the neat thing is watching him finish down the field. He did a nice job of being there to pick up the running back almost every time and I really think he had great efforts to the ball. We talked about how our offense has to control the tempo of the game and we didn't do that, especially early. I think at the end of the first half and then in the second half we were a little better. Our time of possession though wasn't near what it needs to be. Special teams, I thought were pretty good. Jack [Browning] had the kickoff out of bounds and we really don't want the ball in the 35 yard line and he knows that, but he'll get that straightened out. I think he made the 49 yard field goal early, so I was really excited about that for him."

On the most improvement coming between weeks one and two:

"We always talked about how you have to improve between the first and second game and every year. That's something that we strive for whether we win the first game or we get our tails beat like last year. We've got to be a better football team from the first game to the second game and it's going to go the same way second to the third game. So if we can keep getting better than we'll be a decent football team."

On formations by Ohio at the line of scrimmage:

"There's no doubt Coach Maddox is really friendly with the offensive coordinator in Ohio. So he talked to him last night and they have a unique system there. They're going to take the clock down, like we would like to do defensively, and they're going to wait and look if you're one high, two high safeties. Are you a three man front, four man front, or a five man front? And then they're going to make some decisions after that. When they check and when they go like that, that's what they did a lot. We were checking at the same time, probably not as much but we were checking trying to get in a better defense."

On how to prepare for an Idaho State team with a new head coach and new players:

"This is difficult and I've been coaching for a long time. I think they have 70 new players on their team from a year ago. Because you track the background of the of the offensive and defensive coordinators, offensively, we've looked at Washington State, Hawaii, and UC Davis. So we've kind of looked at a little bit of all of it. And then defensively Iowa State is similar and the defense coordinator was there and Bluffton University in Ohio. It's going to be difficult, but the good thing is we have to be better fundamentally. And that gives us a lot of opportunity to get better because of the individual room, the fundamentals and all those things that we need to get better."

On his thoughts about the secondary unit and their future:

"I think they're one of the strengths of our team because of the guys that we have back, at the corner position, the safeties, Cedarius [Barfield] and those guys in the back end. I think Marcus Ratcliffe has been a really, really good addition. When you look at it, we lost some guys up front, obviously, so we got to count a little bit more on that back end so the front guys can come along."

Senior Quarterback Jalen Mayden**On his connection with Mark Redman:**

"I kind of build it up through the offseason. Just a couple of times we've stayed after practice and I'm seeing how high he can actually jump or how far his reach radius is if I throw it back shoulder. In the third quarter, he had a wheel route and there was a guy tough on him and I put it kind of far, back shoulder and he got it for me. So I would say I really have built up quite a comfortability with him and just knowing the things he does well."

On how his experience last year has helped him this year:

"It gave the trust to my teammates more than anything. For me, I had already kind of proven to myself that I could do it. It was more helpful to them seeing me do it those games and then having a full offseason to start this season. They already knew what I could do and it wasn't some transfer guy coming in where you didn't know what you're getting with him. I feel like it provides a level of stability for them."

On his second touchdown drive:

"I really just calmed down and just trusted my reads and my footwork. I didn't skip, I just progressed one by one. And when it's pure progression, it's either he's open or he's not and it's that simple. So if he was open I gave it to him. If not, I just kept progressing and it just worked that smoothly all the way down the field."

On the coaches trusting him to run a play with six seconds left in the half:

"It means a lot but we work these scenarios in practice all the time, I want to say that Cedarius Barfield said in an interview when Marcus had the interception that a lot of times the coaches either gives us it or they don't but they always make sure that we're prepared for any situation. I appreciate that they trust us in those situations, but it's not something that just happens in the game. It's something that we work on in practice."

Senior Linebacker Cooper McDonald

On defensive strengths and areas that need improvement:

"Something we did well as a position group was our back end. They covered pretty well. Something we need to improve on as a defense is our pass rush and getting more pressure on the quarterback. We need to have that relentless effort to get there and work in different moves and not just do the same moves every time, but that just comes with practice. We got another week to do that and we'll get it done."

On linebackers making impact plays:

"With all of our seniors that left last year with my brother, Seyddrick Lakalaka and then Michael Shawcroft, we had some guys step up. Cody Moon was the Mountain West Player of the Week, Zyus Fiaseu also played a really good game. And I made a couple plays here and there but I think we played really well as a unit. From game one to game two, we should see a lot of improvement. That's what we're working on this week: being able to improve week one to week two."

On seeing Jalen Maiden at quarterback after playing with him on defense:

"I think it's helped him out tremendously. He was at safety at one point a full spring. So being able to see him in the coverage element on defense and then being able to see him at quarterback, understanding coverages and what's going on with the defensive backs and linebackers, you can see it show in his play."

On not taking Idaho State too lightly:

"I know they're this whole new program basically with new coaching staff, new players and a new system. Our coaches are going to come up with a good game plan for this week. We respect every opponent that we play, so we don't take any opponent lightly. This is their first game so they're going to be pumped and ready to go when they come down to San Diego."

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