



## **SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS**

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

**November 21, 2023**

**San Diego, Calif.**

#### **Head Coach Brady Hoke**

##### **Opening Statement:**

"It was another tough one to be honest with you, the way the second halves have gone a little bit during the last five games. I thought there were some really good things that our offense did like running the football and time of possession. And at the same time, defensively, we played well for a while and then the second half got away from us a little bit. I thought that the big plays in the second half really made a difference in the ballgame. Really pleased with Gabe and how he handled the kicking duties and what he did there. We have to finish better on defense against Fresno and we obviously need to be able to run the ball offensively. We had two turnovers, not exactly what we want, but we've got to keep improving, keep getting better and play for the guys who have represented this program in the seniors. So that's where we're at. We had a good practice yesterday. We'll have another good practice today. That's how these guys have come out. There have been days where I've started practice overs at other schools. I haven't had to do that here. They've been really, really good about what we're getting done."

##### **On what to attribute the losses to:**

"If there was something to attribute it to, we would have found it by now, but we played really good defense at the start of almost every game. At the same time I'd probably have to go back and really look at it before I say it, but I'm going to say it anyway, I think our offense at times has done a nice job, and we were in sync a little bit like you'd like to be. But then it seemed like the second half as much as anything, we gave up some big plays, and I think that's what's hurt us the most. That and not getting turnovers. San Jose had gotten a bunch of turnovers and that's a tribute to them winning five in a row now."

##### **On how he will remember this senior class:**

"There's a bunch of good kids. How Kenan came in, being at USC and then coming here. Garret Fountain, going from linebacker to a defensive end... the weight that he put in and his work ethic. Mark Redman and Cooper McDonald, how they both have embraced Aztec football. I'm going to forget a bunch of them, so I'm going to stop there. But it's been a class that I think has worked very, very hard. I think it's a class that has fought, that's the only thing I can tell you, when I hear football on the field and the seniors are fighting."

**On senior night coming up:**

"It's senior day, and that's always an emotional day. When you have guys that you've coached for five years, that's always tough. It's tough as an assistant, and it's tough as a head coach."

**On the future of the team:**

"I know that there's a good group of freshmen and sophomores, and when we have pregame meals or Friday night's meal, we go up to the buffet line, and the seniors always go first. I always like to watch because that class goes and then the juniors, then you start counting guys, how many juniors are there? Then your sophomores and all that and you say to yourself, that kid's going to be a good player or, he just didn't have much time yet, or, that kid maybe is not being what we wanted and we need to do something different, but mostly, it's look at that class. There are 18 guys. That's a good class. There are some that we believe fits what we are trying to accomplish defensively and offensively and in the kicking game. There's some good players."

**On some unprecedented difficulties that occur after a coach steps down:**

"You never know what's going to happen. A couple guys may be retained. I have no idea what process we're using, but I do know that there are some guys who know a lot of guys, so it's hard telling them because you look at their wives and kids, and that's the hard part. Most of the coaches have been through this, and so for them, it's not as hard but you know, you have families, we deal with families. That's tough."

**Senior safety Cedarious Barfield and senior quarterback Jalen Maiden****The feelings on finishing their collegiate careers:**

Barfield: "Just excited. Taking it all in, being here for six years. It has been a fun ride. I just remember first stepping on campus and everything like that and just seeing how far we came. So, it's just kind of surreal. Time really does fly."

Maiden: "To piggyback on what he said. Just looking over the last six years, three at Mississippi State, three here. Just enjoying this last week. You never know if it's your last opportunity and for me and him, this is our last opportunity in collegiate football. So just taking it all in and enjoying it."

**The feelings in the locker room following coaches retirement:**

Barfield: "It was a little surprising, but everything he's done has been great for us. Even after the announcement, he's still been coaching us very hard and he's still been into it 110% very intentional and everything like that. After that meeting, it kind of did hit hard, because of how he's such a great guy, a great coach, and had a great career."

Maiden: "I applaud him even more, because he's not taking any different approach to how he's been coaching the team and coaching the d-line group."

**Barfield on what it would mean to win on senior night:**

"It'd mean a lot because a lot of people don't have us or think we aren't going to win, but just finishing strong for coach and for the seniors. And being able to play for the Oil Can too, so it'd mean a lot."

**Maiden on what he's learned from Hoke:**

"For me, it's always to take advantage of an opportunity. Me and him have had our personal talks and it's always been about the opportunity that I have in front of me and whether I'm going to take it or not and do it. I just really appreciate him because every time that I've gone to him, he's always given me something positive. Obviously, it's going to be hard coaching but always telling me to look for opportunities, and just taking advantage of them."