



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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San Diego State Football Press Conference Quotes Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019

Head Coach Rocky Long

Opening statement:

"I appreciate everybody coming. We're moving onto the next game, but I'd like to talk about something that I haven't heard anything about. For (the) opening weekend(s), our conference teams had an amazing weekend. We had a team in our league beat a team from a Power 5 in four of the five Power 5 conferences. I hear about we don't play anybody at home and two of those teams are coming here to play (in the future). One of the teams in our league beat the ACC, they beat the Pac-12, they beat the Big Ten and they beat the SEC. Wyoming beat Missouri and if I remember right, that says the SEC. And they're coming here for a home game. Nevada beat the Big Ten. So I guess our scheduled has gotten a lot better than everybody seems to think it is and our league is a whole lot better than everybody thinks it is. So please don't tell me about the lack of playing home games against good opponents and the lack of good teams in our league."

On if San Diego State plays with a chip on its shoulder:

"I just made a statement because around here we always play the card that we don't belong. We're in a league that belongs and we belong. "

On playing UCLA:

"I think it will be a good football game. This is just my opinion, I think they outplayed Cincinnati. I think they outplayed them on offense and defense every way they could except they turned the ball over four times or they would have won the game. Losing a football game because of turnovers does not mean that you did not play well. Obviously the turnovers are a huge deal because they prevented you from winning, but they moved the ball well on offense. They probably would've scored two more touchdowns if they don't turn it over. They played pretty good on defense. They play hard. They're very talented. A lot of times you outplay people and lose because of a turnover or two. Well they outplayed Cincinnati and lost because they turned the ball over. UCLA is a very good football team.

"I think they have a great coaching staff and they give you a lot of issues that most people don't. I see personnel groups out there that line up certain ways and shift all over the place in order to try to get a numbers advantage, so they're hard to prepare for. Especially on defense because they are all over the place. They end up in some unusual formations and they end up in different places than they start in, so your team has to really be sharp mentally. If you're thinking too much, then you don't play quite as fast. And if you don't play quite as fast and the other team is faster than you, you're in trouble. On offense I think they are big, strong and athletic, and we better block them a whole lot better than we did last week."

On UCLA fans dismissing San Diego State:

"I don't agree with that. I just told you we are not lower tier. Four of the teams in our league beat Power 5 teams in the first weekend(s) of the football season. I don't consider us lower tier."

On the biggest challenge with UCLA:

"Speed. They've got a very fast football team. Watching it on film, I think they are faster than we are."

Is it like "Tortoise and the Hare?":

"I don't think it's that bad. I don't think there's that much difference, but I think they are faster than we are."

On the team's offensive issues against Weber State:

"We didn't play very well."

On what he wants to see improved this week:

"I'd like to score a touchdown or two or three or four."

On if they players have lost any confidence:

"I don't know if our players have lost any confidence. I wouldn't think so. I mean whenever you start the season and play a first real game at full speed game speed, a lot of things don't go quite right. The best thing that happened is we found a way to win anyway. But I think everybody is a little disappointed on how they played the first weekend. Maybe there's two or three teams out there that beat somebody by 50. They're not disappointed. Even the teams that won, a bunch of them have mistakes that they have to clean up. They lost a player or two to injury that they have to replace. You don't know what kind of football team a team is until about halfway through the season."

On if running back Juwan Washington will be full strength this week:

"I hope so. He's got an ankle sprain. He practiced a little bit yesterday and is going to practice more today. Hopefully he'll be 100 percent by game time."

Senior linebacker Kyahva Tezino**On biggest takeaways from Weber State game to improve on:**

"We just want to improve on getting better on every facet of the game, especially on offense and defense. We are going into this next week with UCLA starting over again we want to go in and prove ourselves, start over and make sure everything is perfect."

On biggest challenges for defending UCLA's offense

"The difference is probably the speed because they're a lot faster, obviously they're in the Pac 12. The majority of the guys are four-star athletes. They're going to be a lot faster and a lot bigger. That's probably the difference that I got from it. But we just have to come out of there and play our game and hopefully we will come out with a win. They're just another college football team. They have dudes like we have dudes. They all want to win their championship. We want to win our championship. It's a bunch of student-athletes doing what they love. We don't see them as FCS or as Power 5 if we play one of those schools. It's just another college football team for us."

On importance of SDSU's all-time history against the Bruins:

"That's ancient history, honestly, because we were never on those teams. It's like a new era now."

On playing at the Rose Bowl as a Los Angeles native:

"It's going to be a great experience, I grew up watching UCLA and USC play against each other every year. It's going to be a great experience but kind of stressful because I have to get a lot of tickets for everyone. It's going to be a great experience and I can't wait to go back home, it's going to be like my homecoming. The Rose Bowl is like the Granddaddy of them all. For us to go and play in that is just that type of feeling you get to actually play in the Rose Bowl. It's going to be a great experience and we just can't wait to go out there and win."

Senior offensive lineman Keith Ismael**On biggest takeaways from Weber State game to improve on:**

"We want to go in with a clear mind. We put out the win but like everyone obviously saw it wasn't the prettiest of wins, so we have a lot of things to improve on. In all aspects, every position on offense and defense and just get a whole lot better."

On excitement to play the Bruins:

"I have a couple of boys who play on the team. It's always been a dream of mine to play in the Rose Bowl. Ever since I was a kid I would watch the game with my father as soon as I began to watch football. This is a dream come true for me and to be playing a big-time school in a big environment is always fun."

On time needed to shape offensive line:

"A couple of games, the first game is always tough with a lot of new bodies. The past couple of years we've had some really talented running backs and they've been able to compensate for any flaws we've had on the offensive line. You know we are taking things week-by-week, day-by-day, and we are coming into this new week with a new mindset and every day we are just trying to get better."

On difficulties dealing with Weber State's defensive line:

"They showed us a variation of fronts, they stunted and stemmed and showed pressures. We have a lot of new bodies in there, guys who don't have a whole lot of experience in there so we are just trying to get that cohesiveness and get on the same page but we are ready for it. (It's) nothing we haven't seen before. We just need the veterans like myself and Daishawn Dixon and Kyle Spalding, who played a little bit last year, to step up and lead the pack."

On importance of SDSU's all-time history against the Bruins:

"It's not like we haven't beaten Pac-12 teams in the past. In the past years we've played up to that level and we don't see ourselves as a lower-tier team and as you guys have seen, our conference is not a lower-tier conference. So we are ready for the challenge and we won't back down from a fight."

On the desire to score the team's first touchdown this season:

"It's frustrating on offense when you can't get in the end zone. That's something we've been working on, getting the offense to flow better and getting every position to work hard. Once we get in there we will definitely be celebrating."

On impact of early kickoff time slot:

"I don't think (it's a problem). Last year we played Boise (State) early and we still came out with a 'W'. It's all about your mindset, time shouldn't really affect any of our mindsets or the way we play at all. Although we are used to playing at night, if you're a competitor, that's not a factor. It's kind of nice. We are used to playing late and getting home late and especially with travel games we would be traveling home late. So get in a nice early game, even though it's going to be hot, we are able to get in there and get out and return home and get some rest. Looking forward to that ."

On Ryan Agnew's new leadership role:

"He's done a great job all offseason and all through camp to just hold us together. He's a key figure to our offense, he's the quarterback, he runs the whole thing. He's really stepped up and owned that role for himself and brought all those younger players who are starting to play more with him and with us. He's one of the key figures on our team and our offense."

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