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San Diego State Football Press Conference Quotes

Sep. 26, 2023

San Diego, Calif.

Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening Statement:

Disappointing result on Friday but the one thing we know, we've got a great group of young men. They're playing hard, and they continue to give effort and they finish well. We have seen improvement every week. That is one of the things that are most important and we've got to continue to execute better. And part of that, there's no excuses. Obviously, we got to do a good job as coaches. We can coach a little better. We have to play a little better. The expectations every week are win, and that's not going to change. Win on the practice field, win in the classroom, and win out there in game time. There's a lot that we look forward to, and we've had a good week. It's only been two days, but we've had a good week. We had a really good day yesterday. And some of the things that we learned from Friday night's game we implemented.

On what makes Air Force's offense difficult to defend:

"You don't see it a lot and it's always harder when you have good athletes in those positions. I think they've recruited very well. The quarterback, he was a track guy also, so when he gets out on the edge, he can go. Offensively, they're a good football team. There's enough of the guys who came back from a year ago that we played against. I like playing Air Force, Navy, and Army personally because it exposes your fundamentals, and your discipline with what you want to do."

On if it takes a special coach to be in the environment of Colorado Springs:

"Troy is a graduate, and there's like 11 guys on their staff somewhere through, might be recruiting and might be staff, are all guys who played at the academy. So knowing the expectations and the environment you're in, I do think that's something special. I'm proud of the guys that we have on the staff from San Diego State, who are San Diego State grads. Larry Parker and Kyle Spaulding are in our recruiting office now. That really is exciting to me to have those guys here and be a part of something that they do understand."

On if Air Force is harder to defend because they have so many weapons like Brad Roberts:

"Well, you have to defend the fullback. What that young man Roberts... that guy was a football player. I mean, a bonafide football player, and he was fun to play against. Our guys played pretty well to be honest with you, Jonah Tavai and Banks had their best game in this game a year ago. But you have to stop the fullback. If you don't stop the fullback, you're not going to stop the trouble. They have the two guys they've been using in there and they are really good."

On the progression of the team's offense:

"I feel our offense has continued to grow. We had one sack last week. We did have three false starts and they were kind of spread around, Armstead had one of them. I think we had five total penalties. One of them was a kick out of bounds. So we're better in that area. I thought Kenan had some really powerful type runs a couple of times in there, and we just got to take care of the football. It goes back to the same thing: time of possession, which we've been good at. Air Force's last three games had over 36 minutes of time of possession. We've got to be good in that area."

On if mistakes are magnified because possessions are limited:

"The consistency that you have to have, obviously, in all three phases, but we've got to do a good enough job trying to steal possession. If you can do it, number one, create some turnover. They haven't turned over the ball very much, so create some turnovers that way. In special teams, make sure that you're defending the field and changing the field position. We got to do a great job with that. So those things to me are really important when you play a team that has spent 36 minutes in the last three games possessing the ball."

Linebacker Zyruis Fiaseu**On the focus during practice:**

"Really, this week is just about being physical, being really tough and being disciplined. Their offense has been around for years and we have a game plan to stop it. As long as we do our jobs and everyone looks at the right keys and makes the right move, we will be alright."

On improving tackling:

"All we have to do is wrap up and get them down. We practice tackling a lot. Coaches emphasize it every week, everyday, as part of playing defense. At practice we have to get better and practice our technique, so it's really just on players. We got to be the ones to step up because it's our job."

On the importance of stopping the Air Force offense:

"When you watch the film, and we are going to be watching after this, it's all about stopping the run. When you stop the run, you force them to do things that they're not as good at, which is passing. My freshman year they actually passed a few more times against us. It was the same thing with Sam Houston. Sam Houston defended the run well and forced them to do something different. And that's just how you stop Air Force."

On Air Force's running performance against SJSU:

"We're still watching some of that film, but they ran over 90% of the time against them. All we have to do is learn from their mistakes and do what we do and hopefully it goes well."

On playing in the altitude:

"My freshman year, it was hard. I couldn't breathe during warm-ups. But it's about just staying tough and pushing through it. Just keep playing ball."

Offensive lineman Cade Bennett:**Bennett on the state of the offense:**

"We are getting more comfortable with each other. The receivers have really stepped up in a big way. We had a couple of weeks with a lot of sacks and we kept that down last week. So just working to get better every week. Obviously, there's a couple of things we could have done better there's always what ifs."

Bennett on the identity and confidence of the team:

"It's what we're training for every day. Seeing young kids like Baylin (Brooks) get out there and play, and really turn it on for us. It's been huge for our confidence as a whole unit. We just have to keep pushing. We're not where we want to be but we're on our way."

Bennett on the lack of big runs from the running backs:

"I mean plays like that are always just one block away. There's always some safety or some extra player that just one block or one extra effort could make, and so we just got to be better with that. We have to see the field and try to do all we can to get the big runs."

Bennett the performances from Maden:

"He's been awesome. Everyone loves playing with him. He's stepped it up. I thought last game was great and he's really doing well for us."

Bennett on his improvement from last year:

"It was just an adjustment process with new coaches and a new team. Football is football. The coaches treat me great, so I just have to put my head down and work."

On the difficulty of being a college football player, especially at Air Force:

Bennett: "You have to respect those guys who serve our country. I have friends at other academies as well. It's a grind over there, and they're super disciplined kids for that. So I will always respect those kids."

Fiaseu: "Yeah, big props to them. For them to go out there and play football, and do a lot of things that they do for us with our country. Everything is just amazing what they can do on the field and off the field."

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