



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

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### **San Diego State Football Press Conference Aug. 31, 2021**

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

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

"First off, I'm excited that as a football team we voted Saturday on our captains and (I am) really excited how those votes went. Defensively, we chose Trenton Thompson, Segun Olubi and Caden McDonald, and then offensively we chose Daniel Bellinger and Zachary Thomas. (I am) really proud of those guys. The team made a great decision. Obviously, we are excited about starting off the season, we are just four days away. The other thing we were able to do, we had two scholarships and I really thought there were two guys on our football team who deserved a scholarship. We gave one to wide receiver BJ Busbee and Segun Olubi also earned himself a scholarship, and both of them earned one by how they performed as Aztecs."

##### **On his mindset heading into the 2021 season with its slightly more "normal" nature:**

"Number one, for the players, it is a little bit more like normal college football in the fall, from how we practice to our meetings to everything that we have done to get ready to go play our best. It has really been great. [We] can not wait to have fans and loved ones in the stands, to have an opportunity to watch their sons (play)."

##### **On his decision to start Jordon Brookshire at quarterback in Week 1:**

"The decision was one that Jordon made for us, and when I say that, (I mean) how he participated (with) his toughness, his leadership, (and) his completion percentage from the spring and fall camp. He just really played himself into being the starter."

##### **On the toughness Brookshire showed moving from fourth-string to starting quarterback:**

"He went about his business. At the end of the year last year, he showed a lot of toughness in his style of play and then he continued to improve. We are excited about the direction we're going."

##### **On his dependence on senior leadership:**

"Those guys obviously have the respect of their teammates from how they have gone about their business. With (Segun) Olubi, it is unique because he has not been here that long, but the respect that his teammates for him is pretty cool. Our team, all we want to go do is go out and play football. That is what we want to do."

##### **On what stood out to him from New Mexico State's play on Saturday:**

"You look at them skill wise. Their skill offensively (showed) at the wide receiver position with their Missouri transfer (Dominic Gicinto), who is a good football player, and both of their running backs are very talented. They never got in a rhythm

offensively, either with penalties or the quarterback would have a drive going and then fumble the ball. They never had a chance to get themselves going. Obviously, you have to talk about missed tackles and things that happen in first games. They have a week to clean up their mistakes and we are going to go have to play our best football."

**On the importance of getting Jordon Brookshire and the offense in a rhythm early on in the season:**

"We all, players and coaches, one thing we have always talked about is our improvement from week to week. I am really excited about Jordon, he will do a great job for us. As we go forward, he has earned that right (to lead the offense), but his confidence day-to-day is always growing."

**On which side of the ball/position group made the biggest leap/best impressions since the spring:**

"The offensive line has really come along. We lost a couple starters from a year ago, and I think that Zack Thomas, William Dunkle and Alama Uluave, when you look at those three and then Chris Martinez, they have all really come along. With our tight end position, we are really excited about Dan (Bellinger) but Jay Rudolph is another young guy who I am really excited about and I think our coaches feel the same way."

**On how he let the newest scholarship guys know about their selections:**

"As a head coach, it was something I was thinking about for a long time and the right way to do it. We had them both sing the fight song, which they both did a tremendous job with and when they were done with that, I announced to the team that they both were going on scholarship and the meeting room just went crazy. I mean guys jumping on each other and hugging each other and all those kinds of things. It was really neat.

"What was awesome was to watch their teammates. We had guys jumping from the second row over the first row to get up and congratulate them, so that whole five minutes of the celebration for both of them was awesome."

**On what led to the decision to award Segun Olubi a scholarship:**

"It started with how he played a year ago. When you watch him in the weight room, when you watch him in winter conditioning, his competitiveness is unbelievable. I think you know you ask any guy on this football team that. He competes every down, he competes in every race, he competes in the weight room, and the neat part about it, both (Segun Olubi and BJ Busbee) have those same attributes so it was easy to give them scholarship. With Olubi, you saw how much his teammates think of him and that they saw the same things that we did as coaches. He earned it. He has worked his tail off, both of them have obviously, and he is a big part of what we are as a football team."

**On his plan to attack New Mexico State's defense:**

"We want to run the football. We have got to be able to match what UTEP did. They ran for 203 yards, so we have to be able to knock them off the football and run the football. We have good backs, and we have good receivers who can do a lot of things, but we have got to establish our running game. Defensively, we have got to do a great job against the run, even though (New Mexico State head) Coach Martin likes to throw it around a little bit. We have to do a great job in the open field and in our tackling. Special teams are going to be critical because I can not tell you how many times first games are lost because of poor special teams. That has been a big, big emphasis for us."

## **Senior wide receiver BJ Busbee**

### **On the moment he was awarded a scholarship:**

"It was a great experience. In the moment (Coach Hoke) made (Segun Olubi and I) do the fight song. He made everybody stand up while we sang the fight song. We did it. We sat back down, but he wanted us to stand up again. So right when we stood up he told us he was going to put us on scholarship. From there everybody just screamed and were picking us up. It was a great experience."

### **On being awarded a scholarship:**

"It was a great feeling. I wasn't really worried about it too much as far as going into the season. I was just trying to stay focused, focused on the team and focused on playing. So when it did happen I just felt blessed and just wanted to thank God."

### **On being back in the normal routine of college football:**

"This season I'm really excited that we are going to have fans. Last year not having the fans the atmosphere was a little different but having the fans this year to support the atmosphere will be good."

### **On what he has seen from the offense in the passing game:**

"We had a great summer as an offense and we are still progressing. Practice has been going well. Yesterday we had a good practice throwing the ball. We're staying consistent throwing the ball. Jordon (Brookshire) has been doing a really good job along with all of our quarterbacks, running backs too, catching the ball in space and doing what they do best."

### **On Jordon Brookshire since he's been named the starting quarterback:**

"His confidence went up, but he knows as the wide receivers and as a team we had his back throughout his process. (Same thing) with whoever is in that position."

### **On if there is a specific attribute that will help this team succeed:**

"How close we are (as a team). There's a real brotherhood. We're all bonding. We hang out, not just on the practice field, but outside the practice field, (including) on campus and going to get lunch together. We're always around each other as a team."

### **On what it is about the San Diego State program that allows walk-ons to succeed:**

"The opportunities. They treat every walk-on here just like you are on scholarship as well. There really wasn't a difference on the field. It really doesn't matter if you are a walk-on. If you can play football, you can play football."

### **On the reaction from his parents after telling them he was awarded a scholarship:**

"Right after it happened I called my dad before I practiced and he just started screaming on the phone. (He) was saying good job and that all the hard work you did paid off. It was a great experience. I called my mom too. It was an exciting moment."

## **Senior linebacker Segun Olubi**

### **On which meant more to him, being named a captain or being awarded a scholarship:**

"That's really hard to decipher. I don't know which means more. They are both great honors, one being awarded by your coaches and one being awarded by your peers. I can't tell you which means more but I can tell you that they both mean a tremendous amount to both me and my family."

**On the conversation with his family after he was awarded a scholarship:**

"My mom was happy for me. My mom was just happy that what I had wanted came to fruition. She saw how hard I worked in the offseason and how hard I worked last season, so she was just really proud that what I had wanted came to fruition."

**On the path of earning a scholarship, playing in four different levels of college football:**

"There were sometimes it looked a little bleak. I definitely knew I was good enough. I knew that I had a lot of work that I needed to do, but I needed to keep moving forward. Going from College of Idaho I kind of knew I wanted to play Division I and obviously it didn't go the way I wanted it when I was at junior college (Saddleback College). But I went to a great program (Harding College) from there and transferred (to San Diego State). It was something where I knew I had to keep working. There was a lot of hard work that went into it."

**On what kept him coming back:**

"It was really just faith. I knew I wanted to play football at the highest level, so just trying to use my available means to get where that was the driving force behind that."

**On New Mexico State's dual-threat quarterbacks:**

"We're definitely preparing for that. We're going to make sure we stop the pass game and stop the run game. We know they have very good skill. They return a lot of guys and they're fast. Obviously they didn't have the greatest showing last week but everybody makes their best improvement from game one to game two so we're definitely not taking that lightly. We're just going to make sure that no matter who is in the game at quarterback that we execute our gameplan and trust the coaches that they'll get us in the right spot."

**On how nice it was to see his teammates be so happy for him to be awarded a scholarship:**

"That was a great moment. I loved feeling that energy in the room. I had guys come up to me and tell me they got chills. It was a great moment. I think Coach Hoke and the rest of the coaching staff for allowing that to happen. It was a really beautiful moment and a lot of energy."

**On being back in the normal routine of college football:**

"It's exciting. Obviously having fans in the stands puts a certain electricity in the stadium and makes us play a little bit harder. You don't necessarily feel them in there but when a big play happens, when something happens, there is a lot of noise and (we all) love that."

**On the Aztec defense:**

"We have some great talent coming back. Obviously the whole front 7. The secondary, I feel like we've plugged and played well in the spring and then in the fall. I'm excited. I think we'll be a really good defense this year."

**On what he has seen from quarterback Jordon Brookshire:**

"Jordon has played well. I'm excited. I love the way he moves around and kind of improvise. He has a really good arm. The accuracy is there so I'm excited to see what Jordon can do this year."