



San Diego State Aztecs
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San Diego State's Hillman Named MWC Freshman of the Year, Hoke Tabbed Coach of the Year

Six Aztecs garner first-team all-league honors

SAN DIEGO – San Diego State running back **Ronnie Hillman** has been named the Mountain West Conference Freshman of the Year, while **Brady Hoke** has earned MWC Coach-of-the-Year honors, the league office announced Tuesday afternoon. Six SDSU players were also tabbed to the all-conference first team, four were selected to the second team and another three were tabbed to the honorable mention squad.

Hoke is the first San Diego State head coach to pick up honors from the MWC in the 12-year history of the league and is the third Aztec head coach overall, joining Ted Tollner (1998) and Denny Stolz (1986), who were both selected when SDSU was a member of the Western Athletic Conference.

In just his second season, Hoke has led the Aztecs to an 8-4 overall record and a 5-3 mark in MWC play to tie for third place. SDSU has doubled its amount of wins from the 4-8 campaign in 2009, posted its most victories overall since the 1996 team also had eight and earned its first trip to a bowl game in 12 years. The Aztecs' five wins in MWC action are its most since the league began in 1999.

Hillman (La Habra, Calif.) becomes the second Aztec to be named the conference freshman of the year, joining another running back, Lynell Hamilton, who was honored in 2003. Hillman broke the MWC freshman single-season rushing record with his 1,304 yards on 234 carries to go with 14 touchdowns. He ranks first in the conference, 14th nationally and first among freshmen in the FBS in rushing yards per game (108.7) and is the only player in the league to average more than 100 yards on the ground. Hillman has five, 150-yard rushing performances in 2010, including a league-best 228 yards at then No. 25 Missouri in mid-September, and has garnered league player-of-the-week accolades on three occasions.

SDSU had six players earn first-team accolades, including Hillman, who was the only freshman selected, wide receivers **Vincent Brown (Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.)** and **DeMarco Sampson (Chula Vista, Calif.)**, linebacker **Miles Burris (Granite Bay, Calif.)**, cornerback **Leon McFadden (Inglewood, Calif.)** and punter **Brian Stahovich (Solana Beach, Calif.)**. The six selections are the school's most in a single season in MWC history and most overall since also getting six picks in 1996 as a member of the Western Athletic Conference. The six honorees are the first Aztecs named to the Mountain West Conference first team in four years since defensive end Antwan Applewhite was tabbed in 2006.

Brown and Sampson become the third receiving duo from the same school in MWC history to earn first-team accolades in the same campaign, joining former Aztecs J.R. Tolver and Kassim Osgood (2002) and New Mexico's Travis Brown and Marcus Smith (2007). Burris is the third SDSU linebacker, McFadden is the second Aztec defensive back and Stahovich is the school's first punter to be named to the MWC's first team.

Brown leads Mountain West Conference and ranks ninth in the nation in receiving yards per game (98.9). He has 61 catches for 1,187 yards on the year and has a team-best nine receiving scores. Brown has five, 100-yard receiving performances in 2010, including four vs. MWC foes, and has found the end zone at least twice in a single outing in three contests. The 6-0 wideout is third in Aztec history in career receptions (201) and yardage (2,945) and fifth in touchdowns (22).

Sampson is currently No. 1 in the league in receptions per outing (5.4) and second behind Brown in receiving yards (97.9 ypg.). He posted his sixth 100-yard receiving game in the team's regular-season finale with UNLV and has seven on his career to tie for 13th in the SDSU record book. Sampson has averaged 15.3 yards per catch during his collegiate career and has 144 receptions, 2,197 receiving yards and 18 scores to his credit.

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Burris ranks first in the MWC by a wide margin in both sacks (9.5) and tackles for loss (19.0), which are both career bests. The 6-3 linebacker has a team-high 74 tackles with 49 solo efforts and forced four fumbles, which ties for fourth in school single-season history. Burris has recorded a sack in five of his last six contests and was named the league's defensive player of the week on Nov. 8, after he had 10 stops, including four for a loss, two sacks and a pair of forced fumbles in a victory over Colorado State.

McFadden is tied for ninth nationally and led the MWC in passes defended with 12 PBUs and a pair of interceptions. He also had a career-high 54 tackles with seven behind the line of scrimmage for a loss of 40 yards. McFadden's 12 PBUs are tied for 10th in SDSU season history and are the most by an Aztec since 2005.

Stahovich led the conference the entire year in punting average and currently boasts a 45.7 average, which is eighth-best in the FBS in 2010, and would be an Aztec season record. The preseason all-MWC selection has 16 kicks for over 50 yards, dropped 15 inside the 20-yard line and has had 14 fair-caught. Stahovich was named the league's special teams player of the week following his career-long 89-yard boot at Wyoming, which is a school record and ranks No. 2 in conference history. He was a second-team all-league honoree in 2009.

Three of San Diego State's four second-team honorees were on the offensive side of the ball, led by junior quarterback **Ryan Lindley (Alpine, Calif.)**. Lindley has thrown for 3,554 yards, which ranks sixth nationally, and 26 touchdowns to lead the country's 11th-best passing offense. The 6-4 signal-caller has three of the league's top five passing performances on the year, including a MWC season-best 528 yards against Utah, and six, 300-yard passing games overall. Lindley has thrown for 866 yards and eight touchdowns in the team's last two games alone and stands second in Aztec career history in passing yards (9,261), attempts (1,262), completions (706) and total offense (9,029).

Center **Trask Iosefa (Ewa Beach, Hawaii)** joins Lindley on the second-team squad after starting all 48 games over the last four campaigns. A two-time member of the Rimington Award Watch List, Iosefa has been the anchor in the Aztec offensive line that has allowed only nine sacks on the year and has helped the team rank 11th nationally in passing offense and 61st in rushing offense.

Redshirt freshman **Gavin Escobar (Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.)** is the first Aztec tight end to be named first or second-team all-league since Gray McNeill in 1999. Escobar has 26 catches for 299 yards and four scores, highlighted by a six-catch, 65-yard performance vs. Utah. The 6-6 tight end has started 11 of 12 outings and has 18 receptions for either first downs or touchdowns in 2010.

SDSU junior place-kicker Abel Perez, in his first season on The Mesa, posted a league-best 28 touchbacks on kick offs and converted 17 of his 22 field-goal attempts (77.3 percent), including each of his last eight tries. Perez belted a career-long 53-yarder against UNLV, which is the third-longest in school history and longest overall by an Aztec since 1996. He leads the MWC in field goals per game (1.42) and in scoring (8.3 ppg.).

Rounding out the list of Aztec honorees are honorable mention picks, seniors **Ernie Lawson (Vallejo, Calif.)**, **Jose Perez (Oceanside, Calif.)** and **Andrew Preston (Centennial, Colo.)**. One of the team's three captains, Lawson, a starter at defensive end, has already recorded a career-high 25 tackles with eight of those behind the line of scrimmage to rank 10th in the MWC. Jose Perez is second in the league in pass break-ups with 10 from his starting cornerback spot, while Preston, who moved from linebacker to defensive back in 2010, is second on the team in total tackles with 68 and added a pair of interceptions.

The Aztecs will begin preparations for their first bowl game since 1998, later this week at the team's on-campus practice facility.

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2010 SDSU ALL-CONFERENCE HONOREES

2010 Mountain West All-Conference Football Awards (SDSU only)

Freshman of the Year: Ronnie Hillman, RB

Coach of the Year: Brady Hoke

First Team

WR Vincent Brown, Sr.
WR DeMarco Sampson, Sr.
RB Ronnie Hillman, Fr.
LB Miles Burris, Jr.
DB Leon McFadden, So.
P Brian Stahovich, Jr.

Second Team

QB Ryan Lindley, Jr.
TE Gavin Escobar, Fr.
OL Trask Iosefa, Sr.
PK Abel Perez, Jr.

Honorable Mention

DL Ernie Lawson, Sr.
DB Jose Perez, Sr.
DB Andrew Preston, Sr.

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