



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS
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San Diego State Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening statement:

"When you look at the game, we played really hard. We competed hard, our guys stayed in there together. Defensively, we were able to get a stop early, but then at the end, they got in the endzone, and the offense came alive. We did some really good things in the last two minutes. Overall, we just competed.

We were good on defense early and through two and a half quarters. We had penalties that hurt us a little bit, and we can't have those. We extended drives by having those penalties. But our guys played their butts off.

Are there things we need to do better? No question. And we will do that. The big drive at the end when we needed it by the offense was nice to see. But we have to generate that earlier in one way or another. We have to continue to work on throwing the ball. That's something that we will continue to do as we get ready for league play. We're excited about league play. We have a short week, and we're excited about going to Boise and starting Mountain West play.

On the offense coming alive at the end of the game:

"Number one preparation. You don't execute on two minutes if you're not prepared and you haven't prepared during the week. That's the first thing. Then confidence grows after you have a good run or a nice completion. We were a heck of a lot more confident at the end."

On the team's accountability and toughness:

"Every day we go out there, we improve on the defensive side of it, and that toughness gets better. Alama Uluave, our offensive center, who's a captain of this football team, is an unbelievable leader to a bunch of young guys who haven't played major college football. He has done a great job with it. I believe what our Strength & Conditioning Adam Hall brings to our program when you look at the toughness of his team. We're tougher now than we were in the first game.

On quarterback Braxton Burmeister's performance:

"Braxton started slow, but as the game went on he gained confidence. When he gets himself involved a little bit in the game, starts to scramble, and make some plays down the field, his confidence grows. As a head coach, you don't want him getting hurt, but at the same time, he loves the contact."

San Diego State Running Back/Returner Jordan Byrd:

On the Aztecs 80-yard drive and his two carries:

"I just kept the offense confident. I'm always talking to them and getting the linemen right. We have young guys on the team, and I just kept talking to them, keeping them calm. Just don't let it get to their heads. They opened up the hole for me and I ended up having some good runs."

On immediately running again:

"I have to stay in shape, I'm always running at practice. It was worth it."

On what it means to carry the shield and lead out the team:

"It means a lot. Seeing past guys holding the shield, it means something to me just having that shield. It gives me confidence to know that I can lead this team and be confident that I can be there for everybody. Speaking to them on and off the field is one thing I feel like I do and just keeping them confident. You know, we didn't have two good games but just keep them confident and going into conference, so we're going to be pushing it especially at practice."

On getting more carries this year while still being a return man:

"I love it. You just have to stay calm, you know in those situations. I wanted to return that ball but it was a kickoff but you know we ended up scoring anyways. It's really fun going out there and doing both special teams and offense."

San Diego State Linebacker Caden McDonald:

On ups and downs of the game:

"It's football, no one plays a perfect game. If they did, that'd be amazing, but no one makes a perfect game and you have to just put the plays behind you. Everyone's going to make a bad play. You just got to go to the next one. That's the glory about football. If you're healthy and you make it to the next play, what an opportunity you have, so you just take each player's own, you mess up one play, go on to the next, now let's do better and make ourselves better on that play. Just so happened I got the ball thrown to me right there at the end of the game to close it out. So it was a great way to end the game."

If there is a sibling rivalry with brother, Cooper:

"No, it's a team sport. It's definitely a team sport. I could care less if Coop has a 100 interceptions and I have zero. The Aztecs are winning. That's all I care about."

On how playing Utah made the team better this week:

"Utah is definitely a high-level program. Their offense is a high-power offense. They come out ready to play, they're a physical team too. I like what they do there at Utah. And that just tunes us up and lets us sharpen our tools and stuff like that playing against a big school like that. And against a great team, it allows us to see what we're good at and what we're bad at. After that game, you just watch the film and get better each week. And that's what we did. I feel like we played a heck of a game this week but have to get better. We didn't play a full game. That's what we got to do as an Aztec defense and as the Aztecs as a whole, and that's what we're still trying to do. We played really tough there at the beginning of Utah as well and then we started putting up points and then this game we had some dumb penalties and stuff like that we can get rid of to play a better game."

On being ready for Friday's game at Boise:

"Oh yeah, we're ready to go. Boise is a rivalry for us. Since the Mountain West has started. It's always been Boise and San Diego State. We have a short week ahead of us but I know we're ready to rock and roll come conference play where we're about winning the conference championship. That's all we care about. And now each one of these games from here on out is about winning the championship and we just got to take them one at a time, go 1-0 each week to get that goal and I know the guys are super pumped to get up there on the smurf turf and get out for Boise."

On holding Toledo in check:

"Well, Toledo is a great offense as well. They're number one in their conference for offense and they are a defense so they are good offense, they know what to do. But just dumb penalties with third down stuff like that or just late out of bounds, just extending the job and we kind of got off the field. We're not hurting ourselves a lot, but they got theirs and we got ours."

On teammate Jordan Byrd:

"I'll say something too, this dude trains harder than everyone, he is built for the job. That's the guy we want the ball in his hands. We know when Jordan's got it, he's so electric and so fast. Jordan outworks everyone in the program, this guy works harder than everyone so when the ball is in his hands, we know the Aztecs are in good hands."

Toledo Head Coach Jason Candle**On finishing games:**

"We put a major emphasis on finishing after losing some close games last year. It's painful, you have to be resilient and keep battling and coming back. Credit to San Diego State's defensive front, it was excellent at disrupting some of our plays early. The quarterback made some tough plays in that last drive when they needed it. They made a couple more plays than we did to win it, but we will just have to get back to work next week."

On Burmeister running the ball:

"He got out of there a couple times and got loose, a few guys got banged up and we needed some fresh bodies. We played a ton of snaps on defense today, we have to look back at the tape and see how he got out of there. He's a good athlete, and a really fast player. It's discouraging because most of the game we kept him in the pocket until the end."

On the offensive struggles:

"The turnovers were the story. Especially when they come in tough spots like the ones we had today. Then two missed assignments on a big third down which led to the missed field goal, and you end up with us coming out with no points in our first couple of drives in the red zone."

On the front line's performance:

"I thought we did excellent on the line of scrimmage. Their front both offensively and defensively is disruptive and we did a good job battling for all sixty minutes. I'm most proud of our defense who stepped up and played tough football throughout, especially on third downs where we held them to just one of eleven."

On QB DeQuan Finn's bounce back in the second half:

"I'm really proud of DeQuan [Finn]. I was a little hesitant to see if he was able to play— I'd never want to put anyone in harm's way— but he put up a gutsy performance in that second half. He's a leader and captain to our guys and everyone looks up to him and feeds off of his energy. He made the right reads in the air and a few plays with his feet when we got off schedule, and we're proud of the fact that he's a high level competitor."

Toledo Quarterback DaQuan Finn

Finishing games:

"We just have to finish games, it comes down to last year. The defense just has to continue to make some stops and we just have to come together as a team, and we will get it done."

On his sprained ankle:

"I just have to get back in the training room and start recovering, I'll be back"

On fourth quarter and not feeling 100-percent:

"I was kind of limping a little bit, and I wasn't feeling the best. I saw that the team was down, and being the captain and a leader of this team, I put my whole body on the line. Until the end of the game I was just trying to help the team and put them in better situations."

Thoughts on his passing game:

"I was tentative with some throws and could have made better reads, that's on me. In the second half or the fourth quarter I just went back to the basics and played my game."

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