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San Diego State Football Press Conference Quotes

Oct. 17, 2023

San Diego, Calif.

Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening Statement:

"Thanks for coming. Obviously, it's nice to go to Hawaii. It's a business trip. That's what our guys really were doing. I was proud of how they prepared to go but also when we got there, how they stayed locked into what we wanted to do and what the goal was: to go 1 and 0. We're 1 and 0 right now. A couple of positives was we took care of the time of possession, we had the ball for 36 minutes, turnover margin defensively, we got four turnovers and ended up plus three, and also a fourth down stop. We didn't have any penalties on offense. They had the one on Baylin Brooks that I wouldn't call a penalty, but overall, we played a really clean game. A couple things, Deshawn McCuin, the pick six was a real shot in the arm for us as a team, but I thought we played pretty good football for the most part. The negative defensively was we didn't rush the passer very well. We gave them a little bit too much time as far as that goes. So we have to do a better job there. We did create four turnovers. We had a good fourth down stop and then overall, I thought we played very physical. I thought guys ran to the ball. It was one of those games where you could hear football and I was glad to be able to hear football out there. We had three turnovers: an interception and two fumbles. We have to take care of the ball. We have to take advantage of the field position because field position wise we were really in good shape and offensively, we got to take a little better advantage of that. We have to finish in the short field. The one thing Ryan talked about to the offense was third down mental awareness errors. There were some opportunities if a guy takes it and gets up the field a little bit, we're going to get another first down. So that awareness was something that he brought to us as a staff but also brought to the offense. The positives: ran the ball well, ran the ball much better. Individually, backs, they were making the first first hit or miss and that was good. We eliminated the drops that was hurting us as far as continuing drives. Pass protection was a lot better. I mentioned the time of possession. Special teams probably as much as anything when you look at field position, how that changed and the job that Jack did, and the guys on the coverage and return teams. We blocked a punt, we had a 14-yard punt return Mekhi did, we had six touch backs where Jack put the ball in the endzone. We netted over 50 yards a punt; he was hitting that thing pretty clean. Starting possession for Hawaii was on the eight yard line to seven yard line and one yard line plus the recovered fumble. We were two of three in field goals; we want to be three and three, Jack wants to be three and three. So we got to do a little better job there. But I thought at the end of the day, you look at the time of possession and turnover margin. Then statistically what we did from this standpoint in the quick kicking game, I thought was really good.

On things to look for with Nevada despite their record:

"Well, number one, the opponents that they have played are 26-9, so they have played some pretty good football teams. The quarterback, Lewis, transferred from Colorado and was the starter for Colorado. He's played in significant football games. I

think he's really a good player and he throws the ball well. He also leads them in rushing, and that's something that we've got to work really hard on. You can't be fooled, they're a good football team. We obviously are going with the attitude that we have to win the next one. If we want to do as well as we can do, we've got to improve this week in practice. We had a good day yesterday, but we have to get better and we have to go out and play our best football game of the year. "

On where the team stands at this point in the season:

"We have a team that is pretty resilient, and they pretty much understand where we're at. For us to have the goals that we want to have and you never know about the conference race period, because people beat some people this weekend, and you never know what's going to happen but we have some goals and one of them is to win the next five games."

On the big play from Mekhi Shaw in the Hawaii game:

"It was a huge play and during those last four games, we kind of had those happen to us. So, it was nice to see Mekhi get open. I think they dropped the coverage a little bit. It was great to see Jalen [Mayden] have vision and get it down the field and find him, so I think all that is a product of a little bit of a scramble drill, receiver taking off and going long, and then Jalen did a nice job finding him.

On the importance of onside kicks:

"Well, Coach Deakin does a great job of it. When we go out on Thursdays, the first thing we do is set up our hands team and set up our anti-hands team for when we want to get the ball. So we work on that before practice starts. We show a lot of tape. There are very sneaky ways to do it, in different ways. You kick the ball different ways depending on where you want to go with it."

On what it means to hear Aztec football:

"We're going to go practice today. It's Toughness Tuesday for us and we'll get after each other and by 5:45 I'll know if we had a good practice, and part of that is what I heard during practice. So that was huge. It was a physical game. They were physical on each other. Especially with us tackling and our pursuit to the football."

On the response of his newer players this past week:

"They did good. Azzopardi coming in and getting his first start; he played pretty well, gave us a chance to move Crenshaw to the left tackle, but I thought Drew did a nice job. He's got to improve. The big thing that he and I talked about yesterday is his improvement during this week, but he got better. Lucky Sutton and Sheldon Canley, I think both those guys bring some juice to us as a team and part of that is what they did down on scout team. Then getting them involved in the kicking game, so I think those guys all have done a nice job and earned the right."

Defensive end Garret Fountain and quarterback Jalen Mayden:

Fountain snapping the losing streak:

"I wouldn't say it takes any of the pressure off. I feel like it was definitely a good team win, all around, all three phases of the ball. Football wise, we played physical and tough till the end on offense, defense, and special teams. It's a good feeling but now we've got to get back to work this week and try to strive for that feeling again."

Maden on the state of the team following the win:

"We see that there's a standard in this program for championships. And we're still looking at the games that other teams have to play and you never know how that shapes out. So, we're still in it and you can't win them all unless you win the next one."

Fountain on the upcoming game against Nevada:

"You can't take anything for granted, and you can't underestimate these guys. If you watch the film, they're a talented team, and they play well on offense and defense. They just have some mistakes. We can't say anything about that. We've made mistakes and part of the last month, we were making some mistakes that were more mental than anything. So, we just can't underestimate these guys and have to take each game as one of the toughest games of the year. We just have got to go out there and show up Saturday and play to our level of competition. They're a good football team, and we're a good football team. We just have to put it together on Saturday."

Maden on the Nevada game:

"To piggyback what [Garret] said, we've been watching film, a lot of new transfer guys there and it seemed like they start off every game pretty excited and pretty amped up. So, we just can't afford to make any mistakes. We have to play our brand of football for all four quarters. As well as they move in space, I feel like we have an opportunity to put the ball in space and roll it out there."

Fountain on Nevada's quarterback:

"He's one of the more talented guys that we have seen this year. He's definitely up there with the best in this conference. He's a very good athlete as far as running wise, he throws well too and is able to elude the pressure. So we have to make sure that we're doing everything right and doing everything we can to keep them contained."

Fountain on the game plan to combat their offensive playstyle:

"We'd like to make it one dimensional. For that to happen, we have to keep them contained. We'd like him to throw the ball and we'll play up on the back end as we do. We just have to keep them contained and get after him."

Fountain on the win versus Hawaii:

"It was good. It was a good environment. Hawaii is always a tough team, especially when you play them over there in Hawaii. They're a physical football team every year, and we like to say that we are too. This year we've been kind of missing some of that throughout the season. So, Saturday was good, it was a good feeling to have it back. Everybody was flying around and was bringing their best on their side and on our side, and it felt like a good competition and a good football game to be a part of just with how physical it was and how fast it was."

Maden on the win versus Hawaii:

"I feel like on the offensive side we were kind of just tired of losing you. It was just something about that week where it didn't matter if there was a catch on the other side of the field, we had people from the backside running to go get blocks, just making sure that you know the effort was there. Effort is just one of the things that we really felt like could help us start winning again. And that's what I was really proud of, of that week."

Maden on taking contact as a quarterback:

"I've never really been a person to shy away from contact. I know once I became the starter, I have to like look out for that and can't be getting dinged up, but when I moved from defense, it is kind of just one of those things that kind of stayed with me because if you just put your face on and run through them, eventually they're not going to keep hitting you"

Maden on the play of Lucky Sutton:

"A little surprising because I don't ever really get to see him. He's been on scout team for some weeks and nursing some little tweak things, but definitely a spark. Just a new phase, a new freshness. He doesn't run like any other back. I feel like they all

have their unique running abilities or what they do coming out of the backfield. So, definitely a spark and definitely excited to see him step in."

Maden on hitting the one-year mark since being a quarterback:

"Wow, that's crazy. It's definitely gone quickly since it's already been a year. I'm kind of still grasping the journey as it goes on, but it's becoming a leader. Being a guy that people look at and even when we're down, when needing crunch time play, everybody's kind of looking for me like, "Alright, well we're behind you and we're gonna go as you go", as the coaches tell me all the time. I feel like I've really taken advantage of it, getting guys to stay after practice when we need it. I'm glad I came back to quarterback. I wouldn't change a thing and I am proud of how far I've come since when I first stepped in."

Maden on things he can work on:

"Just still trying to put that full game together. As always there are little spurts here and there. I'll catch a quarter here that is really good and the next quarter I'll drop off... just trying to put that full game together."

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