



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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San Diego State Football Press Conference Quotes Tuesday, August 27, 2019

Head Coach Rocky Long

Opening statement:

"I think our team is tired of practicing and probably ready to play. They probably think they are really ready to play, but I'm not sure they are. Our opponent is a whole lot better than anybody's probably going to give them credit for. They have a couple of things going for them. Their offense is very experienced coming back and they've scored a lot of points. I assume they are going to be better this year because most of their starters are coming back. They have seven starters from California on their team so I'm sure that's an extra incentive. They've got several of them from close by here - one from San Diego, a couple of them from the Inland Empire and a couple from Los Angeles (LA) - so I'm sure they have some extra motivation. The biggest trouble is they're a really good football team and we're going to have to play well to win."

On how tough it was to play fellow Big Sky opponent Sacramento State last year:

"Obviously the coaches have thought about that. I don't think players think about those kind of things. It's hard to remember being a player, but I think their age group they get over things really quickly. They forget things and all they remember is they won. The most important thing is to win, but that's all everyone remembers is winning and they look forward to playing. (The players) don't see all the pitfalls that coaches see."

"I remember it was a very difficult situation (last year) and we were lucky to win the game. Weber State is a much better football team than the Sacramento State team that played here last year."

On expectations on how long it will take the new offense to click on all cylinders:

"I don't have any time frame. I hope it's right from the beginning. We've practiced a lot if you count spring practice and fall camp. We've been in that offense a long time now. I think our quarterbacks are more comfortable in what we are doing now than what they were doing in the past. I think whenever your quarterback is more comfortable you expect better things on offense."

On the biggest question of the offense heading into the game:

"The biggest question is if we are able to take advantage of the numbers game. That if they don't put enough guys close to the box that we're able to run the ball and if they put enough guys in their way we're able to throw and catch it. I don't know if it has anything to do with a specific group - receivers, offensive linemen or running backs - it's that we're able to take advantage of the number situation."

On playing in front of a big crowd at SkyShow:

"It's always nice to have a big crowd. If it's a home crowd it gives you some advantages. If things don't go very well the crowd can get you back into it. If things are going really well the crowd can keep the momentum going. It's a pleasure for our players to play in front of a big crowd and if it's a home crowd it makes a huge difference."

On the concern of the defensive line:

"I think that's the biggest concern on our team right now. I think that we're inexperienced. We've made some progress, but we're not near good enough to be a really good defense."

On how good Weber State has been over the past few years:

"I've been doing this for a long time and you always explain that to them. You show them on film how good the opponent is. You never know if you get through this age group or not. We'll find out on gameday whether they understand that or not."

On if practice feels any different on game week:

"Practice seems about the same to me every year. As a coach you see improvement but you always have concerns going into the first game because you don't know how they're going to play in live action unless you have a very experienced football team. We're experienced in some spots, but we're not very experienced in some other spots so you're not exactly sure how they're going to perform. I wish we had the ability to do dual practices like they do in the NFL. I wish we could go practice someone we're not playing this year and we get a better feel for it. Or have an exhibition game or two, that would be nice so you could get a feel for what your players do well and how your team is going to react. You can make a lot better adjustments if you've actually played against somebody else besides yourself. Going into the first game you never know how your team is going to play and you don't know what the personality of your team is yet. You have some guesses. Sometimes you guess right, sometimes you guess wrong, but you never know until the first game is played."

Senior tight end Parker Houston**On how excited he is for the first game:**

"Straight excitement. Just the rush of being able to play someone different other than our defense. Being able to get back in the regular season to our one goal this year of winning 22 (22nd conference championship)."

On if playing a FCS team is any different than playing a FBS team:

"They're just another college football team. They have dudes like we have dudes. They all want to win their championship. We want to win our championship. It's a bunch of student-athletes doing what they love. We don't see them as FCS or as Power 5 if we play one of those schools. It's just another college football team for us."

On the biggest difference between this season and last season:

"Our leadership group. The seniors we have this year. The four years I've been here, they're probably one of the most dedicated group of seniors I've been with. They're guys that do everything for the team the right way. They lead by example. They're boisterous. They make sure that Coach Long's messages are portrayed in the way that they should be. They're full committed to lead this team to the championship."

On how he takes on the challenge of being a good all-around tight end:

"I think one of the best things about being a tight end is you're involved in all aspects of the game. I like to say we know, if not, just as much as the quarterbacks, because we have to know the blocking schemes, we have to know the route concepts and we have to know quarterback progressions. It's just something if you want to be a tight end you have to be fully bought in. You can't just want to be a receiving tight end or a blocking tight end, you have to be able to do both and be fully bought in if you want to excel at the position."

Senior defensive end Myles Cheatum

On how excited he is for the first game:

"I was a little bit nervous yesterday with the first week of preparation and looking at film. I'm definitely excited for it. I'm ready to hit somebody else other than (the offense) everyday."

On if playing a FCS team is any different than playing a FBS team:

"Everyone shows up to play. They put their pads and helmets on the same way we do here and I think you have to give everyone the same amount of respect no matter where they come from. They all show up to play the same way."

On trying to lead a young defensive line:

"It's just like any other challenge I've faced in my own personal life. I think with a lot of expectations and a lot of question marks, it's a lot of ground for us to show what we can do. There's a lot of room to turn some heads in a way. Along with (defensive line) Coach (Brady) Hoke, we're trying to prepare the right way and doing things in order to put us in the right position to get to where we want to go. And that's to win 22 (win a 22nd conference championship)."

On the biggest difference between this season and last season:

"Along with the seniors we have, the guys below the seniors also have that same level of drive and motivation that you see from a senior. Because it's your last go-around, they recognize the importance of what we're trying to do. The preparation and how the little things really matter in order to get to where we want to go. How everything adds up to the ultimate goal."

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