



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

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### **San Diego State Football Press Conference**

**Nov. 3, 2021**

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

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

"Number one I've very disappointed (in losing to Fresno State on Saturday). As a team we were disappointed. We didn't come out with the victory. We played a very good football team. There were too many mistakes by us and too many big plays given up defensively. We weren't very good in third downs at all and you can't turn the ball over. That is something that is day one football. I like the way we battled. I thought our guys fought and came back. We got too far behind early for the kind of team that we are. When that happens you've got to get fortunate. We had a chance with a fumble after a punt and didn't quite get it, but that would've put the ball on the 7-yard line and that's the difference in winning and losing a lot of times. We're going to get ready because we are playing a very good Hawai'i playing at home. I think this is the first game that they'll have at full capacity. I think (Hawai'i head coach) Todd Graham and his staff do a really good job. They're physical as a football team. We've got to obviously get ourselves ready to go play championship football. We're still a football team that has won seven games. That's an accomplishment but it's not where we want to be."

##### **On the struggles in the first half and if that was related to the physical game the week before at Air Force:**

"I don't think so. I'm going to give Fresno State some credit because they have a really good quarterback in my opinion. Their improvement defensively has made them a better football team obviously than they were a year ago or two years ago. I thought our guys were ready. Your attitude changes a little bit with a slow start, but I thought when the ball was kicked off we were ready to play."

##### **On if quarterback Lucas Johnson took a step forward last week with 280 yards of total offense:**

"I think (Fresno State) knew we had to throw the ball, right? I do think he took some steps forward. He is our quarterback. We've got to continue to make good decisions whether it's throwing it or tucking it and running the football. I thought he was a little better with that, a little more decisive. This is the same thing Lucas and I have talked about. He's got to be able to run the ball a little bit more consistently."

##### **On if there is any quarterback competition for the starting job:**

"It's Lucas (Johnson) right now. Just like any young guy we have on our football team, we want to make sure we are putting the guys who give us our best chance to get in there and win. I think with Lucas that is our best (chance) right now. We're excited about Will (Haskell). We are excited about what Will brings to us. Now it's a matter of him really grasping all the offense."

**On Hawai'i playing so well at home:**

"I haven't had to do it as much as you guys have being on the West Coast. It's always different when you have a 5-hour or 5 ½-hour plane trip. I'm excited to see the venue. You see it on tape and it looks nice. I believe this is the first opportunity to have a full house.

"Number one they have the community support. That always helps. I also thing just the travel. I'm not going to make a big deal about the travel, but the travel is a little different. I think you debate 'do you go on Thursday?' I know we did that in 2019. Did we play better because we went Thursday? We lost. I do know that. At the same time they are a good football team. They have some very good football players when you look at skill positions and when you look at the physicalness of their defense. Being a defensive line guy that's the first place my eyes go. They're a very good football team that we're going to have to play a heck of a lot better than we did at home last week."

**On the biggest challenge of Hawai'i's offense:**

"They're running the football really well and I think the guys running the football are really good football players. (Calvin) Turner can do a little bit of everything. I am really impressed. They have two quarterbacks. I don't know who's going to start for sure, but they have two quarterbacks with good skill. And they're big up front. They're guys who can get in front of you and create holes."

**On San Diego State's running game against Fresno State:**

"We needed (to have success on the ground). You're down 14, but at the same time there was plenty of time. We kept talking about it. I guess I did to (offensive coordinator Jeff Hecklinski) and the offensive coaches, and our team. (I kept saying) we have plenty of time. Don't change our plan because we can score. We ended up doing that and getting close (to coming back)."

**On the Hawai'i defense:**

"They are good up front, and they are very good at when you look at taking advantage of getting takeaways and loose balls. They play really hard defensively. We just have to do what we normally do and that's take care of the football, don't make bad decisions and it's going to be a hell of a football game."

**Junior defensive end Cameron Thomas****On being named a Bednarik Award semifinalist:**

"It's an honor to seeing your name on that list but when I came to San Diego State the only trophy I was worried about was winning the conference championship trophy and I still have not earned on of those."

**On how frustrating it was on the defensive side of the ball against Fresno State:**

"We knew it was going to be a four-quarter game. We came out and we were not as efficient as we've been in the past. We knew we had to affect the quarterback and that's something we didn't do enough. We left our secondary out to dry for that and as you saw that really affected us a team."

**On what the defense can do differently this weekend against Hawai'i:**

"We just have to come out with more intent every week. I think we just started out slow in the first half, especially the defense, myself included. We just did not come out firing like we have in the past."

**On playing a team that goes up-tempo like Hawai'i:**

"The tempo is a challenge to the defense. We take that very personal when they try to run tempo against us. The tougher team will obviously come out victorious in that. I think Hawai'i has a very good and very physical offensive line. I think we are very physical defense so I think it's going to be a good game."

**Senior center Alama Uluave**

**On getting the chance to get to come back to play in front of friends and family:**

"Coming home it's surreal. I'm always happy to come home and play in front of my family and friends. I have a lot of friends on the UH team as well from Laie. Growing up in Laie we always went to Kahuku's (High School) games. That's where my inspiration to play football came from was on that Kahuku High School football field. Just watching my cousins play for our community. Being from Laie is just a real blessing."

**On playing on campus this week instead of Aloha Stadium:**

"I'm definitely going to miss Aloha Stadium. I played my high school games in that stadium. I played in there two years ago (for San Diego State), which was fun. It's good to come back home and play in front of my friends and family. I heard the stadium is going to be packed now so I'm really excited for that. I'm excited that all my teammates don't have family in Hawaii so I get to take all their tickets and hopefully I can fill out a little sliver in the stands with my family."

**On his decision to attend San Diego State:**

"I'm extremely happy being here at San Diego State. I love San Diego. The city is just amazing. The program we're on our way. We are definitely trying to make waves in our conference. We're pushing for that 22nd conference championship. I love my teammates. I love my o-line brothers. I love it all here."

**On if there is a desire for Hawaiians to play at the University of Hawai'i:**

"I think as a Polynesian football player we just really want to get the Polynesian name out there. Players like me, Seydrick Lakalaka, Jonah Tavai and Andrew Aleki, we just really want to get the awareness that Polynesian players are bred differently. We try to come out and show what we can do and we do it humbly. We just love football."

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