

San Diego State Aztecs

2023 Record: 1-0, 0-0 Mountain West
 12 Bowl Game Appearances in last 13 Seasons (Bowl Eligible all 13)
 MW Champions: 2016, 2015, 2012 | 21-Time Conference Champions



Ryan Lindley Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks

- ♦ First season as offensive coordinator (second season as QB coach)
- ♦ Is SDSU's all-time leader in six categories, inc. yards (12,690) & TDs (90)
- ♦ Lettered at SDSU from 2008-11, including 2009-10 under Brady Hoke
- ♦ Came to SDSU as QB coach in Oct. 2022 from Miss. St. (def. analyst)
- ♦ Also coached 2 yrs for the Cleveland Browns (2018 RBs & 2019 QBs)

O-LINE NOTES

- ♦ Only two returning starters started opener vs. Ohio
- ♦ The current starting five has just 26 career starts
- ♦ The current starting five has just 51 career appearances
- ♦ Did not allow a sack in the opener against Ohio
- ♦ San Diego State is 54-2 the last 56 times the Aztecs have rushed for at least 200 yards.

LEFT TACKLE

70 Christian Jones
 6-9 ♦ 315 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 14; CGS: 1
 San Luis Obispo, Calif. (SLO HS)

TOP NOTE: Earned first career start in opener vs. Ohio after entering season with just four snaps.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal
 Tallest player on the team at 6-9... Has lost 35 pounds since coming to SDSU... According to PFF has allowed just two QB pressures (both hurries) in 30 pass opportunities... Coach Hoke praised his play vs. Ohio in Tuesday's press conference... Played all 13 games last year with just 4 offensive snaps (Sept. 10 vs. Idaho State)... RS in 2021... 3-star recruit by 247sports & ESPN... Plays the saxophone.

BACKUP

79 Joey Wright
 6-5 ♦ 305 ♦ Jr.-1L CGP: 11; CGS: 1
 Reno, Nev. (Bishop Manogue HS)

Can also play guard... Played on special teams vs. Ohio... 2022: Played in 11 games w/ start (16 snaps) at Nevada... DNP in 2021... RS in 2020... Prepped w/ SDSU LB Vai Kaho at Reno powerhouse Bishop Manogue HS.

LEFT GUARD

60 Cade Bennett
 6-3 ♦ 305 ♦ Jr.-1L CGP: 15; CGS: 13
 Scottsdale, AZ (Notre Dame Prep/Okla. St.)

TOP NOTE: Earned second-team all-Mountain West honors in his first year with the Aztecs in 2022.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal
Outland Trophy Watch List... Preseason all-MW...
 Has allowed just 6 QB pressures (no sacks) in 397 passing opportunities (0 in 30 this year)... His 83.5 pass block rating was No. 2 in MW in 2022 (min. 300 chances)... Played games at OSU in 2021 (Kansas on Oct. 30 & Notre Dame on Jan. 1 in Fiesta Bowl)... RS in 2020... Led Notre Dame Prep to 7-4 record in 3 yrs... A consensus 3-star recruit.

BACKUP

68 Thomas Mirabella
 6-4 ♦ 300 ♦ Jr.-1L CGP: 15; CGS: 5
 Mission Viejo, Calif. (Mission Viejo HS)

Versatile lineman (G or C)... Started final 4 games at RG in 2022 & 5 overall... Played 335 snaps... 2 GP in 2021... RS in 2020... 2-time MW All-Acad. Team (2021-22) & 2021 MW Scholar-Athlete... A business major (finance).

CENTER

63 Ross Ulugalu-Maseuli
 6-4 ♦ 315 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 10; CGS: 7
 San Diego, Calif. (Mater Dei High)

TOP NOTE: Has already started at three different spots on the offensive line (5 at RG, 1 at LG & at C vs. Ohio).

Notes: Current; Career; Personal
Polynesian College FB PotY Watch List... 1st start at C in opener vs. Ohio, taking over for 3-yr starter Alama Uluave... 6 starts in 2022 (5 at RG & 1 at LG)... Played last 2 gms of 2021 (10 off. snaps vs. USU in the MW title game & ST in Frisco Bowl)... Prepped at power Mater Dei in spring 2021... Also went to JSerra Catholic & Cathedral Catholic... Had offers from Alabama, Michigan, USC & Oregon (& others).

BACKUP

68 Thomas Mirabella
 6-4 ♦ 300 ♦ Jr.-1L CGP: 15; CGS: 5
 Mission Viejo, Calif. (Mission Viejo HS)

Versatile lineman (G or C)... Started final 4 games at RG in 2022 & 5 overall... Played 335 snaps... 2 GP in 2021... RS in 2020... 2-time MW All-Acad. Team (2021-22) & 2021 MW Scholar-Athlete... A business major (finance).

RIGHT GUARD

76 Dean Abdullah
 6-4 ♦ 290 ♦ Jr.-1L CGP: 7; CGS: 4
 Antelope, CA (Antelope HS/American River College)

TOP NOTE: Has put on 30 pounds since arriving at SDSU in the fall of 2022.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal
 Joined the Aztecs for 2022 fall camp... Started opener at right guard after a position battle in camp... Started three games at right guard in 2022 with Ulugalu-Maseuli injured (Toledo, Boise State & Hawai'i)... Did not play over the final seven games in 2022... Transferred from American River College... Prepped at Antelope High School in Antelope, Calif.

BACKUP

68 Thomas Mirabella
 6-4 ♦ 300 ♦ Jr.-1L CGP: 15; CGS: 5
 Mission Viejo, Calif. (Mission Viejo HS)

Versatile lineman (G or C)... Started final 4 games at RG in 2022 & 5 overall... Played 335 snaps... 2 GP in 2021... RS in 2020... 2-time MW All-Acad. Team (2021-22) & 2021 MW Scholar-Athlete... A business major (finance).

RIGHT TACKLE

53 Myles Murao
 6-3 ♦ 320 ♦ Jr.-TR CGP: 5; CGS: 1
 Torrance, CA (Mater Dei HS/Washington)

TOP NOTE: Started the opener against Ohio with just four career appearances before joining the Aztecs.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal
 Athletic, versatile offensive lineman... Came to SDSU in the summer after spending first three years at Washington (2020-22), inc. 2020-21 w/ current Aztec starters TE Mark Redman & LB Cooper McDonald... Played in 4 games at UW in 2022... Prepped at powerhouse Mater Dei HS... 4-star recruit, picking UW over many offers (Alabama, LSU, Michigan, USC, Utah, Oregon, Oklahoma St., etc.).

BACKUP

74 Drew Azzopardi
 6-7 ♦ 315 ♦ Fr.-RS CGP: 4; CGS: 0
 Pacifica, Calif. (Junipero Serra HS)

Big, mobile body... First season on the two-deep... Played on special teams vs. Ohio... Played final three games on the PAT/FG unit as a true freshman, saving redshirt... Prepped at Junipero Serra HS (team was 1-6-2 last 2 yrs.).

TE

♦ Since 2010, eight SDSU TEs have appeared on the John Mackey Award Watch List.

RB

♦ SDSU has had three running backs finish in the top 10 of Heisman Trophy balloting (Marshall Faulk in 1991 (9th), 1992 (2nd) and 1993 (4th); Donnel Pumphrey in 2016 (10th) and Rashaad Penny in 2017 (5th)).

QB

♦ Prior to Mayden, the last SDSU QB to earn all-MW honors was Ryan Lindley (2nd team, '10).

TIGHT END (Y)

81 Mark Redman
 6-6 ♦ 255 ♦ Sr.-1L CGP: 30; CGS: 14
 Newport Beach, CA (Corona del Mar HS/Washington)

TOP NOTE: Became the 3rd Aztec TE since at least 1996 w/ 2 TD catches (Gaving Escobar, 3 times from 2011-12; Kahale Warring at Nevada in '18).

2023 Stats:

GP	GS	Rec.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
1	1	5	62	12.4	23	2

Mackey Award Watch List (outstanding TE)... Preseason All-MW... 1st Aztec TE w/ 2 TDs in a season opener vs. Ohio... 2nd-team TE in 1st year at SDSU in 2022 (21 rec., 233 yds., 2 TD)... 2020-21: 16 GP, 1 GS at Washington (5-yd catch)... Had 149 catches for 1,832 yds & 25 TDs at Corona del Mar HS... Was a 4-star recruit by 247sports & Rivals.

BACKUP

82 Jay Rudolph
 6-4 ♦ 245 ♦ Sr.-3L CGP: 30; CGS: 10
 Scottsdale, Ariz. (Horizon High)

Excellent blocker... Good hands... 2 rec., 6 yds. vs. Ohio... Career: 4 rec., 17 yds., 1 TD... 2022: 9-yd. catch in 9 GP (5 GS)... 2021: 2-yd TD in 13 GP (5 GS)... 2020: Played in 7 of 8 games as a TR-Frosh in 2021 on special teams... Was a 2nd-team all-state selection at Horizon HS.

49 Cameron Harpole
 6-4 ♦ 250 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 10; CGS: 0
 Prosper, Texas (Prosper High)

RB (F)

23 Kenan Christon
 5-10 ♦ 190 ♦ Sr.-1L CGP: 27; CGS: 4
 San Diego, Calif. (Madison High/USC)

TOP NOTE: Has two career 100-yard rushing game and one 100-yard receiving game.

2023 Stats:

GP	GS	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
1	1	11	45	4.1	22	0

Was chosen as a captain by his teammates... Has incredible speed... Great pass catcher... 2022: 71 att., 261 yds., 1 TD & 9 rec., 207 yds., 2 TD in ...10 att., 102 yds., 1 TD at UNM... 2 rec., 111 yds., 1 TD vs MTSU... Career: 159 att., 749 yds., 3 TD; 24 rec., 343 yds., 5 TD... 443 rush yds & 2 TD at USC (2019-21)... Ran for 3,042 yds & 36 TDs at Madison HS.

BACKUP

2 Jaylon Armstead
 5-11 ♦ 215 ♦ Jr.-2L CGP: 20; CGS: 2
 Los Angeles, Calif. (Serra High)

Big, bruising running back... Rushed for 78 yards on just eight carries (9.8 avg.) vs. Ohio... Ran for 313 yards with two touchdowns on 52 carries in 2022 (6.0 avg. (5th in MW))... 2021: 24 att., 75 yds... 2020: 1 att., 5 yds... Career: 85 att., 471 yds. (5.5 avg.), 2 TD... Prepped at Serra HS.

RB (T)

29 Cam Davis
 5-8 ♦ 180 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 16; CGS: 0
 Dallas, Texas (South Oak Cliff High)

TOP NOTE: Is solo atop the depth chart at running back for the first time of his career.

2023 Stats:

GP	GS	Att.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
1	0	1	0	0.0	0	0

Is coming off another good fall camp... Has a quick first step and can find the holes... Carried once for zero yards in the opener but had two catches for 10 yards... Ran for 151 yards & a TD on 46 carries in 2022... Played two games on special teams in 2021... Ran for 2,932 yards and 35 touchdowns at South Oak Cliff HS in Dallas.

BACKUP

13 Martin Blake
 5-6 ♦ 205 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 13; CGS: 2
 Las Vegas, Nev. (Canyon Springs High)

Walk-on, who is coming off a good spring & solid fall camp... Versatile back w/ good hands... Carried 9 times for 33 yds in 2022 in 12 GP (2 GS) w/ a 29-yd catch... Prepped at the same high school (Canyon Springs HS) as former Aztec/all-time leading rusher Donnel Pumphrey.

QUARTERBACK

18 Jalen Mayden
 6-3 ♦ 220 ♦ ^Sr.-1L CGP: 18; CGS: 9
 Garland, Texas (Sachse High/Mississippi State)

TOP NOTE: Has multiple touchdown passes in six of his last seven games at quarterback.

2023 Stats:

GP	GS	Cmp.	Att.	Pct.	Int.	TD	Yds.	Rtg.
1	1	17	27	63.0	0	2	164	138.4

Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Watch List (offensive ties to Texas)... HM all-MW in 2022... Team's Off. PotY... Switched back to QB from S on 0.3.22... Since moving to QB, is 1st in MW in yds per comp. (13.9) & yds (2,194)... Also had 3 rush TD... Moved to S in the spring 2022... Was 5-for-6 for 50 yds & TD vs. USU late in 2021 MW title game (also 36 rush yds on 4 att.)... In 3 games at MSU from 2018-19, was 1 of 2 for 9 yds & 32 rush yds on 7 att... Totaled 9,472 yds & 114 TD at Sachse HS in Texas... Was a 4-star recruit.

BACKUP

9 Kyle Crum
 6-3 ♦ 205 ♦ Fr.-RS CGP: 3; CGS: 0
 Norco, Calif. (Norco High)

Joined the Aztecs in the spring 2022 after signing in January... Has not played this year... 2022: 5-for-17 for 53 yards, TD & an INT in 3 GP... Missed final eight games with an injury... Prepped at Norco HS... Voted top QB in California by sblive.

WR

♦ San Diego State's wide receivers have combined for just nine starts with Brionne Penny and true freshman Baylin Brooks making their first start last week.

WR (Z)

11 Brionne Penny
 6-3 ♦ 200 ♦ Sr.-1L CGP: 18; CGS: 1
 Norwalk, Calif. (Norbonne High)

TOP NOTE: Older brother, Rashaad, ran for an Aztec-record 2,248 yds & 2,974 all-purpose yds in 2017, finishing 5th in the Heisman Trophy voting.

2023 Stats:

GP	GS	Rec.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
1	1	1	9	9.0	9	0

Earned his 1st career start in the opener vs. Ohio... Career: 18 rec., 236 yds., 0 TD... 2022: 12 rec., 166 yds... 2021: 5 rec., 61 yds... 2020: DNP... 2019: RS... Oldest brother, Elijah, played in NFL (Arizona & NYG).

BACKUP

19 Jordan Napier
 6-1 ♦ 195 ♦ Fr.-HS CGP: 0; CGS: 0
 Fontana, Calif. (Jurupa Hills High)

Moved over from safety to wide receiver late in camp... Did not play vs. Ohio... Played both sides at Jurupa Hills HS... Also offered by Washington, Oregon, Arkansas, Texas A&M and Colorado, among others.

WR (H)

83 Mekhi Shaw
 5-10 ♦ 190 ♦ Jr.-2L CGP: 26; CGS: 7
 San Diego, Calif. (Scripps Ranch High)

TOP NOTE: Former walk-on, who earned a scholarship on Nov. 21, 2022 following a 6-catch, 120-yard, 2-touchdown effort at New Mexico.

2023 Stats:

GP	GS	Rec.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
1	1	3	48	16.0	22	0

Most veteran wideout on the team... 2022: 29 catches, 349 yards, 3 TD in 13 GP (5 GS) as SDSU's third WR... 2021: 4 rec., 42 yds. in 12 Gs... RS in 2020... Prepped at nearby Scripps Ranch HS.

BACKUP

40 Mikey Welsh
 5-10 ♦ 170 ♦ Fr.-RS CGP: 0; CGS: 0
 Servite, Calif. (Servite High)

Good route runner with dependable hands... In the 2-deep for the first time this season... Has not played in a game... Redshirted in 2022... Played at powerhouse Servite HS... 1st-team all-league as a senior.

WR (X)

85 Josh Nicholson
 6-0 ♦ 175 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 7; CGS: 0
 Grand Prairie, Texas (South Grand Prairie High)

TOP NOTE: Caught his first two passes at No. 14/15 Utah on Sept. 17, 2022, including an 18-yard touchdown.

2023 Stats:

GP	GS	Rec.	Yds.	Avg.	Long	TD
1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0

Speedster, who is coming off an injury that hampered him in fall camp... Played two snaps vs. Ohio... 2022: 4 rec., 44 yds., 1 TD in 6 games... 2021: Redshirted... Also ran track at South Grand Prairie HS (Texas).

BACKUP

80 Baylin Brooks
 6-2 ♦ 195 ♦ Fr.-HS CGP: 1; CGS: 1
 Pasadena, Calif. (Pasadena High)

Has impressed the staff with his play through fall camp, despite battling an early injury... Against Ohio, became 1st Aztec true freshman WR to start since Elijah Kothe in 2018... Prepped at Pasadena High School.

SPECIALISTS

PUNTER (P)

GP	GS
13	14
49	0

13 Jack Browning, 5-11, 190, ^Sr.**
 49 Zechariah Ramirez, 5-10, 170, Fr.-RS

PLACEKICKER (PK)

GP	GS
13	14
46	0

13 Jack Browning, 5-11, 190, ^Sr.**
 46 Gabriel Plascencia, 6-1, 210, Jr.-TR

KICKOFFS (KO)

GP	GS
13	13
46	0

13 Jack Browning, 5-11, 190, Sr.*
 46 Gabriel Plascencia, 6-1, 210, Jr.-TR

HOLDER (H)

GP	GS
49	1
83	6

49 Zechariah Ramirez, 5-10, 170, Fr.-RS
 83 Mekhi Shaw, 5-10, 190, Jr.**

LONG SNAPPER (LS)

GP	GS
50	28
64	0

50 Ryan Wintermeyer, 6-1, 220, Jr.**
 64 Tyson Chavez, 6-2, 235, Fr.-RS

SHORT SNAPPER (SS)

GP	GS
50	28
64	0

50 Ryan Wintermeyer, 6-1, 220, Jr.**
 64 Tyson Chavez, 6-2, 235, Fr.-RS

KICKOFF RETURNS (KOR)

GP	GS
23	1
22	0

23 Kenan Christon, 5-10, 190, Sr.*
 22 Max Garrison, 5-10, 190, So.*

PUNT RETURNS (PR)

GP	GS
83	1
4	0

83 Mekhi Shaw, 5-10, 190, Jr.**
 4 Dez Malone, 6-2, 200, Jr.**

Positions in gold notes returning starter

indicates player is on a national award watch list



Brady Hoke

Head Coach

- ♦ 2011 Maxwell Football Club Collegiate Coach of the Year
- ♦ 2008 AFCA FBS Region 3 Coach of the Year
- ♦ Four-time conference Coach of the Year (MW - 2010 & 2021, Big Ten - 2011, MAC - 2008)
- ♦ Led 2010 Aztecs to first winning season since 1998



Kurt Mattix

DC/Linebackers Coach

- ♦ Named defensive coordinator in January 2020
- ♦ Now in his 11th year working with Brady Hoke
- ♦ Has 11 years of experience as a defensive coord.
- ♦ Has twice been a Broyles Award nominee (2020-21) for the top assistant coach

DEFENSIVE END

90 Daniel Okpoko

/oh-poke-oh/

6-5 ♦ 275 ♦ ^Sr.-2L CGP: 26; CGS: 1
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada (St. Joseph's HS)

TOP NOTE: Earned his first career start last Saturday against Ohio in his 26th career appearance and sixth season.

Stuck around for a sixth season, utilizing his COVID year after backing up a 2022 defensive line where all three players were in camps this fall... Lanky, defensive end who can move... Is up to his biggest playing weight of his career (275 pounds)... Started for the first time of his career vs. Ohio, making one solo stop, one pass breakup and two quarterback hurries... **Career:** 13 tackles, 1.5 TFL, 1.0 sack, 2 PBU... **Had nine tackles, 1.5 TFL and a sack in 12 games last year in 120 snaps...** Registered three assisted tackles in 33 snaps in 2021... **Played only one game each in 2020 and 2019...** Redshirted in 2018... A member of the Football Canada U18 National Team... Also on basketball and track & field teams.

BACKUP

45 Wyatt Draeger

6-4 ♦ 2270 ♦ Sr.-3L CGP: 31; CGS: 0
Reno, Nev. (Reno High)

Had a career-high 3 tackles & 1st PBU vs. Ohio... **Had 2 tackles in 12 games in 2022 (57 snaps)...** **Had three tackles in 2021, mostly playing on special teams...** Played in 5 of 8 games in 2020... **RS in 2019...** All-state honorable mention at Reno High.

ALSO: No. 30 Dominic Oliver (6-3, 250, So.-1L) ... CGP: 12; GS: 0.

LINEBACKER (SAM)

55 Cooper McDonald

6-3 ♦ 245 ♦ Sr.-1L CGP: 28; CGS: 17
Haslet, Texas (Northwest High/Washington)

TOP NOTE: Older brother, Caden, was a three-time first-team all-Mountain West selection from 2020-22.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

An excellent pass rusher... Transferred from Washington in the spring 2022 along with his roommate and tight end Mark Redman... Has three tackles (two solo), 0.5 sacks, 0.5 tackles for loss and three quarterback hurries in one start this season... **Career:** 72 tackles (47 solo), 11.0 TFL, 4.0 sacks, 2 FR, 3 PBU... **Had 41 tackles (26 solo) in six starts and 12 games played last year with two sacks, five tackles for loss, two fumble recoveries (1-3rd in MW)...** Tied for ninth in QB hits (9 per Pro Football Focus)... **Had 28 tackles (1.5 sacks) at UW (2020-21), playing 15 of 16 games (10 starts)...** Won the discus throw at the 5A state championships in 2019... **Oldest brother, Colton, played at North Texas, older brother, Caden, played at SDSU (2018-22) & dad, Mike, played at Arkansas State.**

BACKUP

47 Trey White

6-1 ♦ 240 ♦ Fr.-RS CGP: 4; CGS: 0
San Diego, Calif. (Eastlake High)

Is on the depth chart for the first season... **Had an interception in his most significant playing time (21 snaps) vs. Ohio...** **Played in three games in 2022, being named SDSU's special teams scout team player of the year...** **Was a three-time first-team all-league selection at nearby Eastlake High.**

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

99 Tupu Alualu

/too-poo/ /ah-loo-ah-loo/

6-1 ♦ 275 ♦ Jr.-TR CGP: 1; CGS: 1
Honolulu, Hawaii (Moanalua HS/Mt. SAC)

TOP NOTE: Earned the start last Saturday against Ohio in his first career Division 1 game.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

Polynesian College Football PotY Watch List... Joined the Aztecs in the spring from Mt. SAC... **Had two assisted tackles, including 0.5 sacks (and 0.5 tackles for loss), in his first Division 1 game and start vs. Ohio...** **Played at Mt. SAC in 2021, totaling 46 tackles and 5.5 sacks...** Also played a season at New Mexico Military Institute in 2019, logging 27 tackles with a fumble recovery in eight games... **Prepped at Moanalua High School in Honolulu for current Aztec tight end coach Savai'i Eselu...** Also played two seasons at powerhouse St. Louis High School.

BACKUP

97 Darrion Dalton

6-3 ♦ 275 ♦ So.-SQ CGP: 7; CGS: 0
Apple Valley, Minn. (Saguaro High (Ariz.))

Is on the two-deep for the first season of his career... All three tackles for his career came in the opener vs. Ohio... **Played 34 snaps... Played in six games (20 statless snaps) in 2022...** Redshirted in 2021... **Prepped at Saguaro HS in Arizona, going 29-5 last three years...** **First-team all-league.**

ALSO: No. 94 Samuelu Tuihalamaka (6-1, 290, Sr.-TR) ... CGP: 33; GS: 3.

LINEBACKER (MIKE)

51 Zyrus Fiaseu

/fee-uh-say-oo/

6-0 ♦ 220 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 16; CGS: 7
Las Vegas, Nev. (Liberty High)

TOP NOTE: Had played only 16 career defensive snaps before earning his first career start against Hawai'i on Oct. 8, 2022.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

Hard-hitting linebacker... High energy guy... **Has three tackles (two solo), including two for a loss and a sack...** **Had 24 tackles (1.5 TFL, 0.5 sacks) in 2022 in 244 defensive snaps...** **Came up with four tackles at No. 14/15 Utah in just six snaps...** **First start came against Hawai'i on Oct. 8...** **Played in two games in 2021 on special teams without recording a stat...** **Prepped at Liberty High School in Las Vegas, helping the Patriots to a 2019 state championship...** **Was an all-state selection and three-time all-league pick...** **Ran for 2,390 yards and 29 touchdowns on offense...** **Picked SDSU over numerous offers, including Oregon, Washington State, Nebraska and Boise State...** **Brother, Austin, played linebacker at UNLV...** **Is majoring in kinesiology.**

BACKUP

42 Brady Anderson

6-2 ♦ 230 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 13; CGS: 0
Bakersfield, Calif. (Liberty High)

Young, strong linebacker... **Has played eight statless snaps...** **Redshirted his second season in 2022...** **Had one tackle in 12 games on special teams in 2021...** **Helped Liberty High to a pair of league titles, going 22-4 overall over his final two years...** **Also was team's baseball MVP at second base.**

DEFENSIVE END

39 Garret Fountain

6-4 ♦ 260 ♦ Sr.-3L CGP: 37; CGS: 1
Turlock, Calif. (Turlock High)

TOP NOTE: Earned the most votes for team captain as voted on by the team.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

Most veteran player on an inexperienced defensive line... **Has great intensity and a high motor...** **Always seems to be around the ball...** **Moved to defensive end from linebacker in the spring 2022...** **Earned his first career start in the opener vs. Ohio in his 37th career game played...** **Has three tackles...** **Career:** 65 tackles (40 solo), 11.0 TFL, 6.0 sacks, 1 FF, 2 FR... **Had 41 tackles, 6.0 TFL and 3.0 sacks in just 369 snaps (of 874, 42.2 pct.) in 2022...** **Had 19 tackles in 2021, with 5.0 TFL, 3.0 SCK, 1 FR and 1 PBU...** **Had a forced fumble late vs. UNLV in 2020...** **Played 1st 4 gms of 2019 on ST...** **2019 ST Scout Tm PotY...** **Led Turlock HS to undefeated league title in 2018...** **Also played baseball...** **Has thrown the football over 70 yards in practice.**

BACKUP

91 Keion Mitchell

6-4 ♦ 260 ♦ So.-SQ CGP: 1; CGS: 0
Framingham, Mass. (Framingham High)

Is on the two-deep for the first time of his young career... **Logged two tackles in his first career 25 snaps last week vs. Ohio...** **Did not play in 2022...** **Redshirted in 2021...** **Was an all-conference defensive line player at Framingham HS in Massachusetts.**

ALSO: No. 93 Brady Nassar (6-5, 240, Fr.-HS) ... CGP: 1; GS: 0.

LINEBACKER (WILL)

58 Cody Moon

6-3 ♦ 210 ♦ Jr.-TR CGP: 25; CGS: 10
Albuquerque, N.M. (Volcano Vista HS/New Mexico)

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

On the Bronko Nagurski Trophy Watch List (best defensive player)... **Preseason all-MW...** **Earned MW Def. Player of the Week honors for opener vs. Ohio (12 tackles (7 solo), 1 PBU & 2 QBH)...** **Career:** 161 TCK, 11.0 TFL, 5.0 SCK, 7 PBU, 1 FF, 1 INT... **HM all-MW at New Mexico in 2022 w/ 105 TCK, 9.5 TFL & 4.5 SCK...** **Had 44 tackles in 2021...** **RS in 2020...** **Former walk-on, who earned a scholarship in the spring 2022...** **Lettered in football & baseball at Volcano Vista HS in Albuquerque, N.M.**

44 Vai Kaho

/vie/ /ah-ho/

6-1 ♦ 230 ♦ Sr.-3L CGP: 31; CGS: 1
Reno, Nev. (Bishop Manogue High)

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

Hard-hitting linebacker who has bided his time working behind veteran linemen... **Is excellent against the run...** **Has two solo tackles in 47 snaps this season off the bench...** **Had 10 tackles (seven solo) with one for a loss in 11 games in 2022 (113 snaps)...** **Had four stops (three solo) with one TFL in 59 snaps and three games in 2021...** **Played seven games on special teams in 2020...** **Lettered at Bishop Manogue with fellow Aztec Joey Wright...** **Full name is Kahomavaillahi Kaho.**

FIELD CORNERBACK

21 Chris Johnson

6-0 ♦ 180 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 13; CGS: 0
Eastvale, Calif. (Eleanor Roosevelt HS)

Notes: Current; Career; Personal
Young cornerback who has impressed the coaching staff... **Is coming off a great fall camp...** **Logged three tackles (two solo) in 34 snaps off the bench vs. Ohio in the opener last week...** **Was named the team's outstanding freshman award for the defensive side of the ball in 2022...** **Has six tackles in 12 games, playing 72 defensive snaps overall...** **Was first-team all-league at Eleanor Roosevelt HS as a senior, excelling as a cornerback, wide receiver, kick returner, punt returner and punter.**

OR

10 Noah Tumblin

6-2 ♦ 185 ♦ Sr.-3L CGP: 35; CGS: 13
San Diego, Calif. (Mira Mesa High)

Athletic CB, who was a dual-sport star at nearby Mira Mesa HS... **Was the team's def. player of the game against Ohio (5 tackles (all solo), 3 PBU)...** **Career:** 50 tackles (45 solo), 1 INT, 12 PBU... **2022:** 11 TCK, 1 INT, 2 PBU in 13 GP (5 GS)... **2021:** 32 TCK & 7 PBUs in 14 GP (8 GS)... **8 TCK, 3 PBU vs. NMSU...** **2020:** 7 GP, mostly on special teams (2 TCK)... **RS in 2019...** **Threw for 4,589 yds & 40 TDs at nearby Mira Mesa HS, & ran for 1,891 yds & 23 TDs as a dual-threat QB...** **Also was a star point guard on hoops team.**

FIELD WARRIOR

3 Cedarius Barfield

5-11 ♦ 195 ♦ ^Sr.-3L CGP: 39; CGS: 21
El Paso, Texas (El Dorado High)

TOP NOTE: Is the most veteran player on the defense with 21 starts and 39 games played.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

Smart player who is in his sixth season at SDSU... **Has four tackles, an interception and a pass breakup...** **Career:** 104 tackles, 8.0 TFL, 2 INT, 8 PBU, 2 FF, 1 FR... **Made 49 tackles last year in 12 GP (7 GS) with 4 TFL, 1 INT, 2 PBU, 2 FF, 1 FR & 1 blocked kick...** **Had 38 tackles (24 solo) & 3 PBU in 1st 10 games in 2021 (9 GS) before injury...** **Had 13 tackles (9 solo) in 2020, including 2 TFL, & a PBU in 7 GP (4 GS)...** **9 GP in 2019 (mostly ST) w/ a PBU late in NM Bowl...** **RS in 2018...** **Played on 4 district championship teams at El Dorado HS, seeing time at QB, WR, CB, KR, PR & P...** **Threw for 5,670 yds & 59 TD, & ran for 3,760 yds & 58 TD.**

BACKUP

24 Josh Hunter

5-9 ♦ 180 ♦ Fr.-RS CGP: 4; CGS: 0
Temecula, Calif. (Mater Dei High)

Logged his first defensive snaps (14) in opener with Ohio, making two solo tackles... **Played in first three games of 2022 on special teams but ended up redshirting...** **Helped Mater Dei HS to two CIF open championships, two state titles and three league championships, where it was a combined 43-2 (.956)...** **Father, Brian, spent nine years in Major League Baseball.**

AZTEC

32 Marcus Ratcliffe

6-2 ♦ 210 ♦ Fr.-HS CGP: 1; CGS: 1
Chula Vista, Calif. (Cathedral Catholic HS)

TOP NOTE: Is first SDSU true freshman to start at signature Aztec position in the 3-3-5 defense (started in 2009).

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

Hard-hitting safety who joined the Aztecs for the spring season... **Not afraid of contact...** **Started the opener vs. Ohio, the first SDSU true freshman to start at the signature Aztec position since the 3-3-5 defense started here in 2009...** **Only the fifth true freshman overall to start in the 3-3-5 defense...** **Had one tackle in the opener and a 100-yard interception touchdown return that was called back because of penalty...** **Prepped at nearby power Cathedral Catholic High School...** **Was a three-time first-team all-league pick on defense and once on offense...** **Also played basketball and was on the track & field team.**

BACKUP

33 JD Coffey III

6-0 ♦ 190 ♦ Jr.-TR CGP: 13; CGS: 0
Kennedale, Texas (Kennedale HS/Texas)

Transfer from Texas who joined the Aztecs for spring ball... **Has one solo tackle in 22 snaps...** **Played two seasons at Texas, totaling 11 tackles in 12 appearances...** **Played in six games in 2022 (six tackles) and six in 2021 (five tackles) as a true freshman...** **Picked Texas out of high school out of numerous offers, including Michigan, Penn State, LSU, Notre Dame, Utah, Oregon, Washington and Florida.**

BOUNDARY WARRIOR

31 Davaughn Celestine

6-0 ♦ 190 ♦ Jr.-1L CGP: 26; CGS: 12
Placentia, Calif. (El Dorado High)

TOP NOTE: Former walk-on who was awarded a scholarship after the spring season.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

Pronounced sell-es-tee... **Has four tackles (three solo) on the season...** **Had 48 tackles (41 solo) last year, starting 11 of the team's final 12 games and playing in all 13 as a walk-on...** **Had a career-high 9 tackles & his 1st 2 career PBUs vs. Idaho State in the start after entering with 4 tackles for his career...** **Logged 2 solo tackles on special teams in 9 games in 2021...** **Played in 3 statless games on special teams in 2020...** **RS in 2019...** **Prepped at El Dorado HS in Placentia, Calif...** **Also excelled as a triple jumper for the track and field team.**

BACKUP

34 Eric Butler

6-1 ♦ 185 ♦ So.-1L CGP: 13; CGS: 0
Corona, Calif. (Centennial High)

Has three tackles (two solo) in 22 snaps off the bench this year... **Mainly played on special teams in 2022 with seven tackles (three solo) as a true freshman...** **Logged 30 defensive snaps overall...** **Played in the final 12 games...** **Prepped at Centennial High School in Corona, Calif...** **Led the Huskies to the state semifinals...** **Centennial HS ended up finishing ranked third in the state.**

Defensive Tidbits

♦ Kurt Mattix is serving as the defensive coordinator in his fourth season at San Diego State and is the first person to call the Aztec defense not named Rocky Long since 2008. Has 11 years of experience as a defensive coordinator.

♦ The Aztecs have had eight of the best defensive seasons nationally and are looking to continue that success this year. Below are total ranks of the last eight seasons and this year so far:

	Scoring	Total	Pass	Rush
2014	13th	16th	19th	48th
2015	7th	5th	10th	7th
2016	17th	11th	42nd	7th
2017	21st	11th	15th	32nd
2018	32nd	22nd	66th	7th
2019	2nd	5th	44th	2nd
2020	11th	3rd	14th	7th
2021	17th	12th	93rd	3rd
2022	19th	15th	39th	19th
2023	2nd	8th	11th	3rd
2014-22	6th	6th	14th	3rd

♦ SDSU defensive ranks under defensive coordinator Kurt Mattix (since 2020): 4th in rushing (97.1), 7th in total (316.3), 10th in scoring (19.4) and 14th pass efficiency (119.1).

♦ San Diego State has held its opponent to single digits 20 times time since 2015 (102 games) and to 10 or less points 31 times over that span.

♦ SDSU has allowed just 860 points over the last 49 games (17.6 ppg).

♦ Last year opponents had 163 drives where they tried to score on SDSU and the Aztecs forced three-and-outs (or less) in 67 of those drives (41.1 pct.). San Diego State averaged 5.15 three-and-outs per game. This year SDSU is averaging 2.00 three-and-outs per game.

♦ SDSU shut out an opponent in the first half for three straight games (Sept. 24 vs. Toledo, Sept. 30 at Boise State and Oct. 8 vs. Hawai'i) for the first time since at least 2000. That was tied with Michigan for the longest streak last season.

♦ Over the past five-plus seasons (2018-23), San Diego State allowed only 32 rushes (out of 1,915 attempts, 1.67 pct.) for 20 or longer (0 in 31 attempts this year (0.00 pct.).

♦ SDSU's 146 interceptions since the 2014 season are the most in the country over that while its 15 interceptions returned for a touchdown ranks in a tie for 16th.

♦ Since the start of the 2020 season, San Diego State has 14 non-offensive touchdowns, tied with Houston, Pittsburgh and TCU for the fourth most in the country over that span, trailing only Middle Tennessee State (16), Alabama (15) and Iowa (15).

CORNERBACK

4 Dez Malone

6-2 ♦ 200 ♦ Jr.-2L CGP: 24; CGS: 12
Fresno, Calif. (Edison High)

TOP NOTE: Was a honorable-mention all-Mountain West selection last year in his first season as a starter.

Notes: Current; Career; Personal

Started his career out at safety but as thrived at cornerback... **Has three tackles and played all 87 defensive snaps vs. Ohio...** **Earned honorable-mention all-MW accolades in 2022 with 43 tackles (34 solo), three interceptions and five pass breakups...** **Saw action in eight games in 2021 on special teams...** **Moved from safety to cornerback in 2021 fall camp...** **Played two games on special teams in 2020 before redshirting...** **A three-star recruit out of Edison HS in Fresno...** **Was a two-time first-team all-league pick and a team captain.**

BACKUP

12 Dallas Branch

5-11 ♦ 180 ♦ ^Sr.-2L CGP: 31; CGS: 10
Redondo Beach, Calif. (Salesian HS/LBCC)

Started the opener with four solo tackles and a PBU... **HM-All-MW in 2022 with 34 tackles (26 solo), 5 TFL, 3 INT, a FR & 2 PBU...** **2021:** 20 tackles (2 TFL), 2 INT, 5 PBUs, a FF & a FR in 9 GP (4 GS)... **2020:** Had 7 tackles... **Joined SDSU from LBCC, where he was a 1st-team all-league pick in 2019...** **Had 50 tackles, 5.5 TFL, 3.0 sacks, 6 INT, 9 PBUs, 2 FF & a FR...** **Prepped at Salesian HS.**

Positions in gold notes returning starter

indicates player is on a national award watch list