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Postgame Football Quotes – San Diego State vs. Utah

Sept. 18, 2021

Dignity Health Sports Park | Carson, Calif.

San Diego State Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening statement:

“What a great football game! I do not know if it is great for you if you're a coach, sometimes I'm sure on both sides of the ball, but two teams fought awfully hard. Everyone made great contributions when you look at all offense, defense, and special teams playing together.

That epitomizes what being a team is, when you have the special teams making plays, and obviously, we have one mishap with a return for a touchdown. When you look at our team as a whole, this was a great opportunity, and I am proud of how they went out and how they prepared last week. We will have a bunch (of things) that we have to do better because if you want to win championships, you have got to go for your perfect every day, and we have got to do that.”

On playing under the new overtime rules for the first time:

“The new rules are probably a good change, instead of being out there and putting more plays on guys. You have teams with the old rules that maybe get done with a football game at 11 o'clock, then overtime, and getting home at three in the morning. I think taking some of the wear and tear out (of overtime) should help us.”

On quarterback Lucas Johnson's performance and overall maturation:

“Lucas is a pretty special kid. In the brief time that I have got to know him, in some regard, he has grown up. On the sidelines and being around him, he comes over and says “Coach, we're going to be fine.” He is settling me down and I am trying to settle him down. He did a nice job. I don't know all the statistics yet, but in the flow of the game in the second half, our team really started to feed off each other.”

On the conservative running in the fourth quarter:

“There is no doubt that we were going to try and milk the clock as much as we can to make them use some timeouts.”

San Diego State QB Lucas Johnson

On Coach Hoke starting him versus Utah:

"Coach Hoke had faith in me. We went out there and our O-line played well, and in overtime, they gave me time to throw the ball to the receivers who were making plays. It was a team thing and we were ready once we knew it was coming, we were ready to go."

On the overtime huddle:

"Utah had the momentum, but we knew what we could do and that if we took it one play at a time that we would come out successful."

On the excitement of the triple-overtime win:

"That was the most exciting end of a football game I have ever been a part of. It makes it so much better knowing all the work that everyone has been putting in, and to get a big win like that at the last second is 10/10 in excitement. It was awesome!"

San Diego State RB Jordan Byrd

On his kickoff return for a touchdown:

"It was so great. During the first return of the game, I saw the kickoff flow to the right side. I thought maybe it's going to work with the play that we ran. I told coach, and he believed in me and believed in my team that we were going to make those blocks, and it came out to be a good play."

San Diego State RB Greg Bell

On his performance tonight:

"My offensive line gave their all blocking tonight and opened some holes for me. I got two touchdowns, but I can not fumble. I put us in a hole when the game should have been over, but things happen and we got the win."

San Diego State LB/S Segun Olubi

On how he excels in multiple facets of the Aztecs' defense:

"It is up to Coach (Kurt) Mattix. He puts me in a good spot to make plays and I just try to execute what he sets up for me."

On changes the defense made in punt coverage after Utah's punt return TD:

"It is just making the tackle and making sure I keep him (the returner) over my left shoulder. Coach Deakin always makes that a point. I was trying to make sure we fanned and covered him after I saw he (Britain Covey) beat one tackler. I tried to make sure to maintain my leverage and get him down."

San Diego State DL Cameron Thomas

On how the defense was able to put pressure on the QB:

"We knew coming into the game that they were going to have a good offensive line, that they were going to be physical. We were relentless this game and we prepared really well and it all just paid off in the end."

On the depth of the defense:

"I think we are a really well-coached group and come game time, that really pays off. We have a lot of players that can step up and play a huge role in this defense."

On the difference in covering Utah when they changed QBs:

"(Charlie) Brewer was more of a stay-in-the-pocket, bounce-out and breakaway late player, where when #7 (Cameron Rising) stepped in, he was kind of going freestyle and was a lot more mobile than #12 was but I thought we responded really well."

On his emotions were at the end watching the video replay:

"I still can not believe it. When it was official, I was so excited. I do not even know what was going through my mind, but it was a great team win and I am excited to keep this season rolling."

Utah Head Coach Kyle Whittingham**Opening statement:**

"We had a furious comeback at the end of the 4th quarter but we came up short. We had a great kickoff return out of the gate, but we could not get anything generated on offense. For those two and a half quarters we could not get anything, so we had some issues there. I thought Cam (Rising) was poised. He was in a tough spot. That is not an easy spot to be in, and I thought he responded very well."

On if Cam Rising will be his starting quarterback moving forward:

"We will evaluate that tomorrow. We will most likely want to start on Monday, take a look at some high-end film and take a good hard look at both performances and make a decision on who we are going to go with. At this point in time, that is how it is moving forward."

On what made him switch quarterbacks:

"We only had 90 yards at halftime, and we were looking for a spark. We were looking for something, and we have an excellent quarterback in Cameron Rising, so why not give him a shot? He works hard in practice, as hard as anyone else. He has prepared himself in the right way, and there was no doubt in my mind that he was ready to play because that is the type of kid that he is. I thought, given the circumstances, he deserved that opportunity."

Utah QB Cameron Rising**On the two-point conversion and making it to overtime:**

"It was amazing. We had a great fight back. It was a great feeling, but just not the finish we wanted."

On if he thought Connor O'Toole made the catch on the two-point conversion:

"It does not matter what I think at this moment. That is what they called and that is the way the cookie crumbles, I guess."

On what was not working for the Utah Offense:

"We need to check the tapes, but I know we just need to come out a lot faster and really set the tone from the get-go instead of trying to play catch-up."

On his mentality during his quick entrance into the game:

"I wanted to just put us in a position to win the game and get warmed up as fast as I can. I got about three throws in and just went out there."

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