



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### San Diego State Press Conference Quotes Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019

#### Head Coach Rocky Long

##### **Opening Statement:**

"Thanks for coming, I appreciate you being here. Once again we are going on the road to play another game in a place I've been many times. It's a very difficult place to get to and a very difficult place to play. It happens to be their first home game after they've played two top 20 teams - the No. 2 ranked team in Alabama and the No. 23 ranked team in Washington State. So (New Mexico State) being at home and not playing a top 25 team, I bet you they're really excited about the possibility of getting a win in their first home game. And I don't want anyone making a mistake because when you watch them on film from last year when they played similar opponents to them, which we are, they're a much better football team than they were against Alabama, but most people that play Alabama look bad."

##### **On changes from weekend No. 1 to weekend No. 2 offensively:**

"I think that the players prepared better and obviously performed better, or more efficient at what they did and did a better job. Coaches don't change. Old coaches don't change. It wasn't the play calling change, it wasn't the intensity level or the coaches yelling and screaming or anything like that. The players win. The players win games. The coaches can lose games by calling the wrong decision at the wrong time but coaches have never won a football game. Players who play well win football games."

##### **On what was different with quarterback Ryan Agnew:**

"I guess he felt more comfortable and probably prepared better during the week. He went into the game and things got better early, and he just got better as it went (along)."

##### **On difficulty to watch film of a team who is playing two vastly superior teams:**

"Alabama did dominate on both sides of the ball. When you watch Alabama on film, you understand why. It's like a Triple A team. They start 22 guys and all 22 guys are going to be playing in the NFL one day. So they're kind of special. Washington State really ran up and down the field on offense but Washington State's defense did not stop New Mexico State. The quarterback completed almost about 67 percent of his passes for over 200 yards and they rushed right at 100 yards. Now they fumbled twice going into the end zone. They probably should've scored 28 points against Washington State. Washington State scored 58, but but their offense played really well against Washington State."

**On past players reaching out after the win at UCLA:**

"A lot of the players who have played for us reach out with text messages. And some of them were at the game, so it's nice. Ex-players you treat them all the same, it doesn't matter which ones reached out, a whole bunch of them reached out."

**On returning to campus after win:**

"It's funny when I first got here, we had a win like that. I don't remember exactly the year but we beat someone we weren't supposed to beat. We came back here and there were fans here and the band was here and all that kind of stuff. That doesn't happen anymore, I guess they're expecting us to beat people."

**On not being able to run the ball this year so far:**

"We've got to get better at running the ball which means we've got to block better at the line of scrimmage. I think we have some quality running backs that haven't really gotten started because we haven't blocked the line of scrimmage as well as we should, especially for the run. Now that adds to maybe we have practiced running the ball as much as we've practiced throwing it and being able to throw the ball has helped win a couple games. At least in the second game we were throwing it and catching it much better than we were any time last year, or any time the year before that or anytime the year before that. Now we spent all of our time running the ball and last year we ran the ball OK but we weren't scoring enough points. That's why we changed the formations in the offense. Maybe our offensive line is just getting used to the difference in the plays we are running even though they're very similar and the attitude is the same. But the offensive line has to block better than they have been the first two weeks."

**On difficulty finding balance between running and passing:**

"I think the balance helps the whole team. It helps the defense, it helps special teams, because in this last game we controlled the football. But if (New Mexico State) is going to put up enough guys, well Alabama is different, they don't need to put up enough guys. They just put up five guys and stop the run dead. But when you follow a normal team, if they put too many guys in there to stop the run, you're able to throw it. Thank goodness we were able to throw it (last week). And if they spread it out in order to take your passing game away, then we are going to have to run it better than we did."

**On Ryan Agnew's ability to run the pocket:**

"I think in this day and age all of those quarterbacks are that way. You have to be a guy that can buy time with your feet. You've got to be a guy that can run with the ball when nothing else is there. You see it creeping into the NFL now, about half of the teams in the NFL are running the same offense and the quarterbacks are different than they were in the past. You see some little guys running around, throwing the ball instead of those 6-6 guys that stood in the pocket and threw it over the top of everybody. Now you see a bunch of athletes as quarterbacks running around and buying themselves time to get receivers open and buying themselves time to get a first down by running it. That's the way the game is going. The quarterbacks maybe don't throw it as well but they're becoming much more athletic and size isn't a big deal in the NFL anymore."

**On if Saturday was a breakout game for Ryan Agnew:**

"You have to look back to last year, I thought he had a couple outstanding games last year that we won when he was the starting quarterback. Now you can ask him, I know he's coming in here, you can ask him if he thinks that was his best game. That's one of his best games, but I wouldn't necessarily say it was his best game or a breakout game, because when he was the starting quarterback last year we won a couple of really important games and he played pretty well."

**On the breakout game for Kobe Smith:**

"I think it was a breakout game for Kobe Smith. You know someone asked who I thought the receivers were going to be that came out of training camp and I happened to mention Kobe Smith and guess what I'm glad when they make you right. But no he had a good game, he got himself open and the best thing he did is when after he caught it he gained extra yards by catching and putting the foot in the ground and going towards the in zone."

**On impact the SB 206 will have on the NCAA and SDSU program:**

"I don't know where it's going to go, so for me to make an assumption on where it's going to go from here. I don't know."

"My thought process is that it's also going to improve recruiting dramatically if you're one of the schools in California that has financial backing enough to play players. I think you're going to get the best players in the country. So that's going to put a whole lot of pressure on the NCAA to include those guys in a national championship. I don't know how it's going to go, I'm not even sure that it'll make a difference."

**On how hard it is for New Mexico job to turn around:**

"I think the New Mexico State job is a very difficult job and the coaching staff that is there now has done an unbelievable job. They know what they're doing and they are a great coaching staff. They've done a good job recruiting. You hate to say that when they had to play Washington State and Alabama. You haven't seen them on film like I have. They've got some players and when they get into a position where they have a chance to win the game, they're going to win some games. They had to go out and play those guys for the pay day. You talk about the haves and the have nots. They're going to play Ole Miss too, they're going to make \$3.8 million to support their athletic department. You have to do that in places like New Mexico State in order to keep the athletic department alive. The football team isn't going to get a new weight room, not going to get a training table because they took those games. The athletic department and all sports - men's and women's - are going to be able to survive because their football team was willing to do that. Now for the longevity of a coach it's not very good process, OK? But all the non-Power 5 guys have to do that to support their athletic department. And that's the way it should be. Now we are talking about paying them more, I don't see it I don't believe in it."

**Senior quarterback Ryan Agnew****On what was the feel from week No. 1 to week No. 2 offensively:**

"We made plays in week two that we didn't make in week one. I thought the coaches did a great job of transitioning us from week one to week two. Getting us most prepared and then the guys going out there with the mentality that that's not the offense we want to be in week one and in week two. We really improved on it and it helped us."

**On if was it aggressiveness, intensity or focus:**

"It was a whole bunch of things, it was everything. Week one we didn't have intensity, we didn't have focus, we didn't win our 1-on-1 matchups. We didn't play well collectively. Week two we improved on everything, but watching the film yesterday we saw there's a lot more room for improvement. Just because we had a big win, doesn't mean we are going to stop there."

**On was it helpful to have Kyree Woods on your (Agnew's) side:**

"I always want Kyree on my side, this guy's a stud. I'm glad I'm sitting next to him and he's not facing me."

**On Kobe Smith's breakout game:**

"Kobe, man, Kob! He's a stud. All of our receivers are studs - Jesse Mathews, Kobe Smith, Elijah (Kothe) - all the guys who can get their hands on the ball. They're all really good players. I wasn't surprised to see Kobe have that stat line. I think there are many other receivers that are going to have that stat line but it was great to see Kobe make some big plays. (I'm) excited to see what he can do the rest of the year."

**On his opinion of the Aztecs ability to play anybody:**

"We have that mentality whoever we play on Saturday. It doesn't matter what conference they come from, it doesn't matter how big or small their guys are, we go in with the same mentality. If we play right game of football, if we play San Diego State tough, hard nose football, we can go up against anybody in the country and we truly believe that."

**On player awareness of SB 206 passing within next 30 days:**

"I think we've always heard that story. I think I've been hearing it for the past three or four years about college athletes, should we be paid, should we not? Are we amateurs that would turn us into professionals? I guess the main thing I would say is it shouldn't span just to football. If it's going to do football then it should go to baseball, should go to basketball, it should go to men's, it should go to women's sports. So they need to take that into account. It shouldn't just be one sport, it should be everyone as a collective whole and at the end of the day we want to be eligible to play for a championship. So whatever keeps us eligible is what I want to do."

**On seeing yourself on billboards and potentially making money off of that:**

"Personally I don't think about that in the moment. I was lucky enough to be on a billboard, and Kyree was too, and when you look at that you're just so happy to have that recognition to be up there representing San Diego State. They give us so much as it is. We get meals, we get to fly on planes to games, we get to play on national TV, we get to go to school for free. There's a lot of things that come with it. We are seniors so we probably won't get to see the paid side aspect but you know whatever they decide is probably the right decision and if they decide to pay athletes it's probably for the right reasons."

**On comfort zones from week No. 1 to week No. 2:**

"I think week one for everyone - offense, defense, special teams, coaches - you get those butterfly feelings, you get nervous. First game of the year, playing in front of the home crowd, a great home crowd with a lot of people there. You want to play the perfect game. Offensively we were a little too up tight, a little too worried. We wanted to see how great we could be and we didn't play as well as we wanted too and going into week two we saw that we were really close, we saw that we were a good football team. We just said hey, let it hang loose, go do what you need to do, go do your job, trust that the guy next to you is going to do his job and we are go to be successful if we do that."

**On surprises on what's going on in the conference with other teams:**

"I'm not surprised at all actually. We have played all of those schools and all of those games we played against those schools have been hard, tough battles. I'm not surprised to see any school in the Mountain West have success with not only teams within the conference but you know some of those big powerhouses, you know Wyoming beating Missouri, Boise State beating Florida State, Hawaii beating Arizona and Oregon State, and Nevada beating Purdue. It's just cool to see them be successful because you want everyone within this conference to prove how good we are because people might not watch us. We are in the Mountain West and play the late games, so it's really nice to see them get the recognition they deserve too."

## **Senior cornerback Kyree Woods**

### **On difference this year in preparation:**

"I think just our preparation during the week. We are a young group, just going in we had to fill the shoes of Damontae Kazee, Malik Smith, Na'im McGee, and all of those guys. I feel like we matured a little bit and think that we work well together."

### **On what challenges does New Mexico State present:**

"They have great wide receivers, I feel like we have to prepare well for them. They have very good athletes. I think they throw the ball 60 times per game, so we just have to be on our A game on Saturday."

### **On difficulty watching film of New Mexico State getting beat up by top teams:**

"I mean, it's Alabama, I feel like they do that to a lot of people. It's not really difficult, we just have to prepare the right way. They are a very talented team, we saw on film that they played very well against Washington State and they have athletes just like we do. We can't take them mildly because our coach always preaches that any team could be beat any team on Saturday. So we have to prepare the right way."

### **On player awareness of SB 206 passing within next 30 days:**

"Same thing with what he just said. I feel like it could be a good thing, spread money around all the programs these work just as hard as us. Like Ryan said, we are just trying to win the championships."

### **On do you see it happening (SB 206):**

"Eventually. We'll probably be long gone though." (Agnew in agreement: "Yeah, long gone.")

### **On what a win over UCLA does for a team:**

"Hard wins like that bring us all together. It just excites us for the future because we know how good we can get as well as just watching the film over and just seeing how much better we can get. (The wins) are good for the soul, good for the locker room and good for the energy in our practices. It just motivates us to go harder see our potential just go through the roof and just try and get better each week."

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