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NEWS RELEASE

San Diego State Bowl Announcement Press Conference Quotes

Director of Athletics Jim Sterk

Opening statement:

"It's been a crazy few hours, but we've just received word and we're so proud and excited to announce that the Aztecs will be playing in the R&L Carrier New Orleans Bowl on December 17, 8 p.m. Central Time on ESPN. I'm just excited for the development of the program. It's a great reward for the hard work that our coaches, our players and all the support that our fans have given us all year long to be rewarded with this game. It's one that's historic from the standpoint of (it being) the first time in our Division I history to go to back-to-back bowls. As I sat here just short of a year ago and announced this guy to my right (Rocky Long) as our head (football) coach, that he would lead us in the right direction. I'm excited about this year and the future and what this program is doing and what we have to do yet. I'm excited to be able to be here today and announce that we're going to New Orleans and having a fun time down in the Bayou."

Head Football Coach Rocky Long

Opening statement:

"The team just found out about an hour ago. This team is well deserving of the honor of going to a bowl game. We've been bowl eligible for almost three weeks now and there was a lot of talk that we weren't even going to get a bowl bid. But this team deserves to be in a bowl game and I know our players are excited about it. I've only been to New Orleans one time, but last week I checked out the team we're going to play, the University of Louisiana. New Orleans is only an hour from their campus. They've sold anywhere from 12 to 15,000 tickets already, depending on who you ask or where you read it. It's basically a home game for them. I hope we have some people follow us, but in the Super Dome I know where the crowd is going to be behind. Because even the people that don't have any allegiance that come to that game, they're going to be rooting for them."

On how practices will be arranged to prepare for the bowl game:

"The game comes so quick, we're not going to get extra practices. It's a basically a bye week. So this is our third bye week of the season. We're going to handle it a little different than we have our normal bye weeks, but it's not the same as if you had 30 days between your last game and the bowl game. We're happy to be going and maybe we'll be more tuned up than we would have been if we had 30 days to prepare."

On if he was concerned the team wasn't going to receive a bowl bid:

"As other teams in our league became bowl eligible and bowls started saying who their preference was, it looked like we might be sitting on the edge looking in. Bowls pick teams for a lot of reasons; it's not win-loss record. They pick the teams to come to their bowls for a lot of different reasons. I thought we were deserving when we became bowl eligible. There's two other teams in our league that became bowl eligible after we had already been bowl eligible, so it would have been wrong if we wouldn't have been in a bowl game."

On what his thoughts are now compared to his preseason expectations:

"Our preseason expectations are to always win every game and we didn't win every game. This team did a great job of competing every single week. Last year, 8-4 seemed like an unbelievable. Well, let me tell you, 8-4

this year was harder than (what) last year's team had it. Our preseason schedule was harder, the expectation level was harder, the way the people critiqued our team was harder. In my opinion, this team did better than last year's team."

On what the team's reaction was when they found out about the bowl game:

"It took so long for us to find out that we were going to a bowl game, we actually had started our meeting. They were wondering why I was stalling because I wouldn't tell them anything. Then I told them the truth that we were still waiting around. When the word finally came to the room, they were really excited about going to a bowl game. I don't even know if they knew it was New Orleans at the time, they just knew we were going to a bowl game, so they were excited."

On what he knows about University of Louisiana:

"I watched two of their games on film last week. This team was picked to do nothing this year and got a brand new coach last year who has done an amazing job. They play extremely hard, they're very talented in some positions and they are a really good football team. And nobody expected them to be a good football team. They kind of remind me of our team last year. No one expected them to do anything and guess what, they're 8-4 and they're really excited about being in a bowl game. Everybody there is really excited. I actually watched a 30-minute pep rally on their website when they were invited to the game."

Senior Quarterback Ryan Lindley

On playing in a bowl game for the second straight year:

"We're happy to be playing. We all had an exciting (game) last night and we're just glad to be in a bowl game. The quick turnaround in some ways is going to be good, like Coach Long said. It's almost like we have another bye week and we're playing again. If we had to wait for somewhere like San Francisco and wait until New Year's Eve, that's a long time to not be playing. The way we're playing right now, I'm excited to get back on the horse."

On if there was a worry that the team wouldn't get into a bowl game:

"After last night, probably not. I think it was just where are we going to go and everybody can speculate all they want, but we were waiting to get into the meeting room and hear it from Coach Long. After we won (last night), if it would've went the other way then we probably would've been a little worried."

On the team's reaction when they found out they were going to the New Orleans Bowl:

"It was kind of like what Coach Long said. We almost laughed when he told us that (the coaches) didn't know. It was a little worrisome, too. We didn't know where we were going. When it came out, we were excited that we had the news. I think everybody is excited of where we are going. It's going to be an awesome week and an awesome bowl game."

On if playing in a city where he's never been makes the game more exciting:

"I think that's all part of it. I don't know if it's as much for us as it is for the people who are going to follow us and our families. We're excited to be in a bowl game, coming from where we were at, where we hadn't gone to one for a while (before last year). We're excited to make that a back-to-back thing and hopefully a yearly thing."

"It's going to be a trek, too, like Coach Long and Mr. (Jim) Sterk said. We just hope we get a following. We know that we are going to be the away team there since they are (playing) in their home state. At the same time, we can just take that to heart. We've done well on the road this season and we'll just treat it like another road game. We'll be excited for people to come out. It's obviously a great venue. I've never been there, but New Orleans is a great city and it'll be a fun place to go."

On playing in back-to-back bowl games:

"It's great. We want to leave a legacy where that is a yearly thing and it's not a surprise. We want to get to that point where we are in that talk with TCU and Boise State. That's the potential that is here and that's the way we are moving. We're looking to improve and get better every year. It's great to see, it's great to start and hopefully they keep that going next year."

Senior Linebacker Miles Burris

On playing in a bowl game for the second straight year:

"I'm absolutely excited. It's a great opportunity. We're happy to be able to play in a bowl game and just happy to be able to win that game last night. Hopefully we'll send our seniors out with another win in our last one."

On the opportunity to play on a national stage:

"It's a great opportunity. It's going to be something that we are all looking forward to. It's one of those things where you go out and prepare like you would for any other game, and play your heart out and as hard as you can. It's just a bigger stage where more people can actually see what you are doing over here. It's definitely a big thing. It's awesome to be able to go to back-to-back bowl games and to show the nation what we can do over here, to get more publicity and hype in San Diego."

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