



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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San Diego State Football Press Conference

Nov. 22, 2021

Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening statement:

"Obviously it's great to win football games. (The win at UNLV) was not pretty as you all know, but it was when the team hung in there and played together. The offense at end of the half and end of the game, and really doing a great job defensively when they had to shut down UNLV at the end there did a nice job. It was a good win. It's pretty decisive what's next and what's in front of us."

On the improvement of quarterback Lucas Johnson:

"When Lucas got here there was something about him where you gravitated to him a little bit. From playing quarterback I thought he's improved. During the offseason a year ago and coming into this season I thought there was improvement. I think he just kind of stepped up. He's become more comfortable in what he's doing and I think part of that is knowing the system. I do think part of it early was him knowing our players and getting to know the guys, his teammates, and his teammates getting to know him."

On being 6-0 in one-score games this season:

"I didn't realize that so I'm glad you said that. I think (the team) is pretty resilient. I think they're a group where there hasn't been any finger-pointing. When one side of the ball is now doing well as another side there's been none of (finger-pointing). They've believed in each other and it's been a fun group to be around. The older guys who have been here, including the ones in their sixth year, there's been some good leadership from those guys."

On it being kind of strange honoring seniors Friday when some might come back because of the COVID year:

"No doubt it will be strange. But it's something that's really important and it's always been important to me. There are three guys who have gone through winter conditioning and spring ball five or six times. That is an investment. This isn't easy, right? It's not easy and it's not for everyone, and I think our guys understand that. I have a lot of respect for the guys who have come through (our program)."

On Boise State starting slow but playing much better lately:

"They've got good players. When you look at their schedule, you know they've played some pretty good football teams. They have good quarterbacks and they've got a really good offensive line. The defensive line is good. They're a really good football team and it's going to be a heck of a football game."

On playing at 9 a.m. but playing in front of a national audience on CBS:

"I think our kids are excited about it. I don't think they care when we play. They just know that they have a job to do - and we all do - and that's go out and play. I do know my father-in-law, who's 90, and my mom who's 89, they'll like the time the game's on at noon back in Ohio, so I feel good for them."

Senior linebacker Caden McDonald

On how hard it's been the past two seasons playing all of SDSU's home games in Carson:

"I don't think it's affected us too much. At the very beginning of last season, it was kind of a haul, going our own way to go play the games, but now we like it. It's part of our routine. It's our home stadium up there, and our fans travel and support us. We have the best fans and for them to make that trip up there just to watch us play is awesome."

On if Friday against Boise State feels like a championship game:

"We always preach in the locker room '1-0.' I guess what we always say is let's just go 1-0 this rep, this day, this week. We treat every week like championship week. November is championship November. That's when the championship is won in those games in November. That's when it counts. Every week this month has been championship week to us. This is just another week to go 1-0 for us."

On what he remembers playing at Boise State in 2018 when the teams met the last time:

"That was an awesome atmosphere. I always tell people that the best atmosphere I played in was there at Boise. That was the loudest crowd I've been a part of. I wish we got to play them every single year, but every time we play them it's such a close game and a great game. Whether it's at our place or (in Boise), the tension, the atmosphere is so electric. It's such a blast playing (Boise State)."

On Boise State:

"They're definitely playing their best football right now. They're peaking at the right time. They've got a bunch of great athletes on their team. A good wide receiver core, great running backs, great quarterback and offense line as well. Their whole offense is rocking and rolling right now. Our game plan is to try and stop them as a whole (offense)."

Senior quarterback Lucas Johnson

On getting the chance to go for it on fourth down:

"It feels good because it says the head coach has confidence in your offense picking up the first down. When coach shows confidence in us, we know we have to go out there and do our jobs."

On the relationship he has established with wide receiver Jesse Matthews:

"Jesse and I, we've been putting in work all year. All of the receivers have. And that goes all the way back to winter, spring and summer. Going out on the weekend after lifts. Going out and throwing. It just turned out Jesse was making plays last weekend. We all were as an offense and it just happened to click."

On if he envisioned all the success coming back home to San Diego State (from Georgia Tech):

"No, not really. I was just talking about this the other day. Coming home and competing for a championship for your hometown, it doesn't get better than that."

On if Friday against Boise State feels like a championship game:

"It's extremely exciting. Every week we treat everyone the same. We have to go out and practice. We have to prepare like every week is a championship. So that's what we're going to do this week. It's exciting because it's getting down to the wire and this team is really resilient, and we're going to come out fine."

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