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5500 CAMPANILE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92182 | (619) 594-5547

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Postgame Football Quotes – San Diego State vs. Utah State Saturday, November 4, 2023 Snapdragon Stadium | San Diego, Calif.

San Diego State Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening statement:

“Obviously, it's the broken record that we don't want to play. I know one thing is that in the last few weeks these guys have come to work in the building, in the practice field, and we saw that tonight because I know they played hard. You could hear football out there. Obviously, we want to score more points, and we've got to do a better job there. Also, when you look at us defensively, they played pretty hard, but we gave up two big plays. We've got to be more aware of situations. It's tough stuff on them. It's tough on all of us. But, I loved the way that we came out and played physically. The one thing we can't afford is we were 84 yards or something like that in penalties. The penalties that are physical penalties I don't have as much of a problem with. The penalties before the snap and those things will set you back.”

On Kenan Christon's performance:

“I've been impressed with Kenan and how he's come out every day. He got voted as captain, and that tells you what his teammates think. The most important thing is what his teammates think. He's just been better, so I'm glad that he had those opportunities. He's always been pretty good out on the backfield catching the ball.”

On the overtime performance:

“I wish we would have been able to go on defense first, you get a little settled in that way. But the process, it's a lot better than it used to be. I know we played seven overtimes at Western Michigan when I was at Ball State, so this is much better, it keeps the kids healthier. The play they ran, we practiced three times. The guy just didn't have his eyes where they needed to be, but we practiced the last one a few times. In fact, we practiced seven, two-point conversions over the last three years, and Kurt Mattix went back and got all of those, and we practiced all of those.”

San Diego State RB Kenan Christon

On what he felt was working tonight:

“Coach said these past two weeks, we've really been coming in and working. We just kind of honed it in. We were just kind of clicking on offense, and of course, we had times when we were three and out, which is not ideal. The times we did drive down and finish the series, we were pretty fired up.”

On ensuring the San Diego State culture is intact despite the losses:

“It's instilled when you're brought to San Diego State in the first place. You're told that there's this culture that you're coming into, and it is what it is. But as an older guy and as a leader for me, and I'm sure for Garret Fountain as well when somebody is going against the culture, we have to get them back in check. Even though things aren't going our way right now, we still need everyone to keep the culture going.”

San Diego State LB Garret Fountain

On the defensive performance in double overtime:

“We may have got caught up. We were trying to do too much. We were trying to make plays that were out of our job. We were trying to do too much to try to stop them. If everybody's trying to do that, mistakes can be made.”

On what the team has to do in the next three games:

“We can't stall now. We have to finish. Us finishing, rolls to the next year, we have to finish, come to work, and show some of the younger guys that are setting up that it takes everybody, it takes us to work. No matter what happens, you just have to finish.”

Utah State Head Coach Blake Anderson

Opening statement:

“I was super excited with the outcome. It was a tough night. Really, nothing went well offensively early. Their front created problems for us all night. The defense did a great job keeping us in it and hanging in there, just playing and playing. We had some key plays that had to be made tonight to get the win. You look at the fake punt and then going down and getting points. The ability to pop up a couple of big runs and defensively to play as stingy as they did. The turnover right there at the end, nobody wants to be put in the position where we're having to battle two-point plays. I am super, super proud of how [QB] Cooper Legas came off the bench. This has been tough for him. I just told the team that I couldn't be more proud of the way he's handled himself. It's been tough to go back and forth. Be a starter, not be a starter and all the things he's had to deal with. He's handled it like a pro. He's been amazing in the locker room. He's been amazing with [QB] McCae Hillstead. When he had to come off the bench, he did a phenomenal job. You look back, and that's the first time he hasn't had a turnover since Idaho State, and that's been the one thing that we absolutely had to get out of it. I am super proud to be taking the first step to get where we want to get to, whatever that looks like, and we'll rally the troops and get some guys healthy and try to find a way to get to step two.”

On Ike Larsen not being afraid of the moment:”

"I'm excited to see it. I mean, nobody wants to see that ball taken the other direction any more than I did. The thing that's really, really huge, and it's maybe not part of the story, maybe not everybody saw it, but he had a busted coverage in the series before that gave up the touchdown. He's supposed to be over the top of that thing, and for him to come back and make a huge couple of plays. He made a big tackle on our sidelines, and then the interception there late, that's huge. It's what you love about him. The moment doesn't get too big for him. He knows you're going to make some plays along the way. You're going to make some mistakes along the way. The next play is more important. He just has a tremendous capacity to move on to the next play and be ready when the moment is biggest."

On the layers to this game:

"There's a bunch of big plays in this game, and as we peel the layers back, you're going to see things that were more subtle in this kind of game. They ran the clock. They shortened the game. They made it difficult for us up front all night. Some of the key plays the defense made throughout the night weren't really fancy or spectacular in terms of how they looked, but were super critical to us being able to stay in this thing long enough to go get the win. That's the first time we've been in overtime all year. You can't take that for granted that we were able to score and get the two-point play the way we did. That's big."

Utah State RB Robert Briggs Jr.

On overtime:

"We know we could come out on top by keeping the faith in each other, so that's what we did. We kept faith in each other and pushed it in."

On the importance of the offensive line:

"If it weren't for the offensive line, it never would have happened. I just want to give thanks to the O-line."

On the last play and his touchdown:

"It felt amazing. I saw it, and I knew I had to get in the endzone. I give glory to God."

Utah State S Ike Larsen

On coming back from his busted coverage:

"I busted that coverage. I let my teammates down, but when we were on the sideline, they all had faith in me. That helped a lot. I just went out there and tried to play the best I can for my team and I ended up making two great plays. Props to my other teammates on the field who helped me do that."

On what it feels like to make key plays at the end of games:

"I can't really express the feeling. It gets better and better each time. What it comes down to is being locked in, being prepared in those big moments, and not letting them be too big. Me making the plays, it's great, but it's a lot of preparation."

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