



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### San Diego State Press Conference Quotes Tuesday, Sept. 17, 2019

#### Head Coach Rocky Long

##### **Opening statement:**

"We're back at home, ready to play a home game. Hopefully we can get a lot of people out to watch because it ought to be a really good game. Utah State's obviously one of the better teams in our league. They have some outstanding players coming back from last year and they had a great year last year. (Jordan Love) is an NFL guy. How high he's getting drafted, nobody knows. I've heard all the way from the first round to the third round, but they've got an NFL quarterback. Their statistics are eye-popping. They're gaining over 600 yards a game and scoring over 48 points a game. They're an awful good football team coming in here. We have our work cut out for us."

##### **On Utah State quarterback Jordan Love:**

"He's a big, strong guy that can do things with his feet, but he doesn't usually have to. He's got great accuracy, but he looks like he throws effortlessly. He just kind of flicks the ball and he completes the ball 50 yards down the field. He's a very talented young man that played really well last year and has started off playing really well so far this year."

##### **On how concerned he is stopping Utah State's passing attack:**

"If you watch them on film and look at the statistics, you're very concerned. We have to give ourselves a chance to stay in the game. As fast as they score points, you could be out of the game before it even started. Obviously we have to play good enough defense to keep the score at a point that our offense has a chance to outscore them."

##### **On Utah State coming off a bye week:**

"I think everybody's different off a bye week. You're obviously going to be healthier because any nicks and bruises have all been healed. You're going to be quicker and faster, because you'll be refreshed. The coaches have an extra week to prepare your game plan, so their game plan will probably be excellent. There's a lot of different advantages that you get from a bye week. That's just the way it is so you don't worry about it. You go about your business, but a bye week should help them."

##### **On if there is anything they could learn from watching Utah State lose to Wake Forest in the opener:**

"Wake Forest moved the ball really well on offense and scored enough points to win. They also won the time of possession battle, so Utah State didn't have the ball as much as they would have liked. Utah State is a tempo team, which means they are moving fast and trying to get as many plays as quick as they can as well as tire you out and keep you from doing some exotic things of defense. People think they do that for a lot of reasons. Obviously the more plays you get the more yardage you can gain the more points you can score. But in our case, we're pretty complicated on defense. So the faster they go, the more they limit our defense on what we can do."

##### **On the running back situation and the health of Juwan Washington:**

"Number one, hopefully Juwan gets well and he can play this week and be near a 100 percent. He's not right now. He practiced a little bit yesterday but he wasn't 100 percent, so I don't know what he'll be like today. I thought going into the season one of our deepest positions on our

team was running back. Thank goodness for that, because we have a couple of running backs hurt and we still have three healthy ones that are pretty good players. Hopefully they'll continue to perform at that level so that we can run the ball, run the clock and keep their offense off the field."

**On what kind of crowd he expects for Saturday's game:**

"I have no idea what kind of other things of going on this weekend or what the weather is going to do or anything like that, so obviously you have no control. For the football fans out there, this ought to be a really good game. You're going to get a chance to see one of the future NFL stars playing here, and a high-powered and everybody-likes-to-watch offense out there. It's a very entertaining prospect, and I think the game is going to be close and pretty exciting."

**On if Jordan Love is similar to former Wyoming and current Buffalo Bill quarterback Josh Allen:**

"He's very similar to Josh Allen. I think that he's a big, strong guy and Josh Allen could run with it if he had to, but normally he didn't have to because he was completing passes. He's very similar. He's a big, strong guy that if he has to run, he can run. He can run you over, he can make you miss and he can put it in the end zone. Most of the time he doesn't have to run because he's able to read the coverage and he's thrown the ball on time before the pressure can get there. And he's very accurate. Josh Allen to me looked like he wound up and threw it, and had a gigantic arm. (Jordan Love), he kind of flicks the ball. It doesn't look like it's any effort whatsoever for him to throw a pass. Most of the time it's on target and it gets there awfully fast. He can be going to his left and throw a 60-yard pass back to his right. He did it several times in the last two games. He's obviously an NFL guy, I think a very high draft choice in the NFL. Any time you have an NFL quarterback on your team, guess what? You are pretty darn good on offense."

**On if he is surprised on how quick the Mountain West teams won some big games this season:**

"Not at all. The last few years the Mountain West Conference has played well against all the other leagues. It doesn't matter if they're Power 5-leagues or not-Power 5 leagues. Overall the league has been very competitive, not matter who you play. I'm not surprised at all. There's 12 teams (in our league), there's six or seven that legitimately have a chance to win the conference championship and two of them are playing here this Saturday."

**On who has the advantage between a good offense and a good defense:**

"I don't think (there is an advantage either way). They've only played two games and we've only played three. That's a very small sample size. At the end of the year if they are still gaining over 600 yards a game, they'll be the No. 1 offense in the country. They would be the best. We'll see what it is after 12 games. I'll promise you this. If after 12 games we are still only giving up eight points a game, we'll be No. 1 in the country and probably the lowest total in a 100 years or something."

**Senior quarterback Ryan Agnew**

**On the team's confidence level:**

"Any time you can enter a game undefeated, going up against a really good opponent and starting conference play, you have the upmost confidence. You can not be in a better position than we are right now. Being able to play your first conference game against a great opponent, great offense, great defense, and bringing them here to San Diego in front of a great crowd, I am really excited for it."

**On meaning of entering a bye week undefeated:**

"It would be massive. The first three games were much needed wins and they were really good to get the confidence going, but those game are out the window now. All that matters are winning conference games at this point because we preach everyday 'win 22' and those three games that we had before did nothing for the conference championship. So this week, more than anything, is the most important game because one, it is the next game and two, it is a conference matchup and we just want to go 1-0."

**On importance of winning this game:**

"We definitely understand the importance of this game. Everyone saw how good Utah State was last year and they brought back a lot of guys this year who have all played well up until this point. Their offense is averaging over 640 yards a game and their defense has some All-American type of players like (David) Woodward and Tipa Galeai. We understand the importance of this game and we understand how good this football team is."

We know going into a bye week, if you can go in 1-0 in conference rather than 0-1, it's going to be really good. It's going to be a really good boost going into the rest of conference play. We are going to do everything we can to go 1-0."

**On significance of Utah State's interception statistics last year and if that will affect this decisions this week:**

"We understand that they have a really good secondary, they get pressure on the quarterback and they have very good linebackers. So you definitely have to be aware of it, you can't make mistakes or make throws that you may have made in the past because you have to understand that they are really good in the secondary and they are really good in the back end. You are mindful of it, but that can't scare you. You just have to understand and recognize coverage as well as possible. Understand what they are doing, trust the game plan, trust the throws and trust the receivers. Put that work in during the week so that when the game comes on Saturday, it is just second nature having to make those throws and make those reads."

**On wide receiver Jesse Matthews' consistency:**

"Jesse! That man's got hops! I saw that last year, we would always throw a 'Hail Mary' at the end of practice and he would have some great hops and go up and get the rock. So, whenever he was coming out this year and he was starting to get some playing time, I was like that is a guy I can trust. I know if I throw it up there he can go and get the ball and you guys have seen it in the first three games. He's a really good athlete. He has a really good feel for where the soft spots are, a really good feel for where to position his body and for where he thinks I'm going to throw the football. Couldn't be more happy with him right now or the rest of the receiving core. It's been fun."

**On success running the football last weekend:**

"It's monumental. Ever since I've been here we've focused on 'San Diego Aztecs, we control the line of scrimmage, we run the football,' and the first two games and especially at UCLA we kind of threw it for a little more. So now being able to run it a little more we have that two-headed dog coming into conference play. When you can be hitting on all cylinders, passing and running game, that just makes the offense tougher to stop. Now we just have to put all of that together, it's going to make us very tough to try and slow down."

**Senior defensive lineman Myles Cheatum**

**On biggest challenge facing quarterback Jordan Love:**

"How versatile he is. I think he does a lot of stuff really well and I think he gives their offense a lot of different options, so that creates a lot of different challenges to prepare for that style."

**On how the defense will get ready for Utah State's uptempo offense:**

"Prepare physically, obviously be in good enough shape to handle the amount of plays they like to run. Also creating a lot of pressure, getting in the back field and creating havoc back there, trying to slow them down as best as we can. But at the end of the day they are going to try and do the things that they do well, and we just need to be prepared for what they do."

**On team's current confidence level:**

"I would say extremely confident. We always prepare to win, expect to win, obviously do the best we can and live with the results. But I think as a team right now we're gelling. I can really only speak for the defense. I think everyone is playing real confident, especially in the back end, those guys are gelling really well. Putting a good product out there on the field."

**On importance of winning this game:**

"I think it would be a big help (heading into the bye week). Coach Long told us the other day that at the end of the day it doesn't make or break our season. It's just another step on the road to getting to where we want to go, which is winning 22 and at the end of the day that's all we are really concerned about is getting to the end goal. The process is the process and you have to maintain that. At the end of the day it doesn't necessarily make our season or necessarily break our season."

**On strengths of Aztec defense to attack Utah State's up-tempo offense:**

"Versatility. We have a lot of really good players and I think a lot of guys can do a lot of different things really well. I think that's a challenge for anybody that we play against. To account for guys in the middle the linebackers, the guys in the back the secondary. Up front we are trying to

apply as much pressure as we can on the quarterback and make his day a little bit longer than it usually is. But I think that's one of the strengths of our defense is how versatile we are and how unique the system that we run is."

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