



SAN DIEGO STATE COMMUNICATIONS

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Postgame Football Quotes – San Diego State vs. Ohio

Aug. 31, 2024

Snapdragon Stadium | San Diego, Calif.

San Diego State Head Coach Sean Lewis

Opening statement:

“We have to start a heck of a lot faster in the first half and play with much better discipline as we come out and do the basic things at a much higher level to start the game. We’re really proud of the resiliency of the club, the character of the club and the way that they responded in the second half. We’re going to do a much better job with our discipline and limit the number of penalties. Obviously that is unacceptable, but I’m really happy to get the win. It’s going to be a lot better to clean up a win than it is a messy loss. We’re happy to do that. But obviously, lots of room for improvement, lots of room to grow, but I’m really proud of everyone in the program and the work that they put in to get to this point and to be one to know.”

On learning to win as team:

“It’s just the kids needing to learn how to win as a team, because there are so many moving parts and so many new pieces. We are having to figure out what it all looks like. It’s an emotional game that needs to be played with emotion, but you can’t play emotionally, right? We can’t have foolish penalties that extend drives and things that happen pre or post drives. We talk about our controllables.”

On quarterback, Danny O’Neill

“I thought we had some massive advantages that we could use with the quarterback and receivers being on the same page, we’d be in a good spot. He settled into the game. It’s his first start, obviously, with all of it. Like, hey, no one needs to do anything they aren’t trained to do and do that at a really high level. And again, probably did that much better in the second half.”

On the defense locking in during the second half

“I thought they did a great job of communicating. They were playing with great effort and running to the ball, effecting their quarterback and getting him off his rhythm and disrupting some of the timing. It goes back to the basic fundamentals, those core tenants

of communicating, playing with relentless effort, having great focus, and we just did that at a higher level.”

Sophomore Linebacker Tano Letuli

On his defensive touchdown:

“That was my first college touchdown but I wouldn’t have been able to do it without my teammates - Trey White punching the ball out, Cody Moon being there. And I just happened to be at the right place at the right time.”

On the defensive front line:

“My D-line did a great job. It makes my job 100 times easier and they did a great job today. It made my reads easier and made the team everything for me to fit.”

On the halftime locker room talk:

“The biggest thing on the defensive side of the ball was don’t panic. We’ll stay with what we’ve been doing and just work as a team, fixing things up, and just keep fighting. Come out with energy and just don’t panic. Just stay calm and trust the defense and trust our team, trust our offense, and it worked out.”

Senior running back Marquez Cooper

On his first game as an Aztec:

“It feels amazing just being at San Diego State. Everything feels amazing with guys that were able to set the tone before me, and guys to chase their greatness behind them. So with Marshall Faulk, Rashaad Penny, and Donnel Pumphrey and guys like that – you know, I chase those guys every single day.”

On expectations set for himself:

“I feel like I’m one of the best backs in the nation, if not the best back. So I don’t feel like a lot of people view me as that or look at me as that. A lot of people count me out because of my size, and I’ve been dealing with that for my whole life. So, I’m just trying to continue to be the greatest man I can be every single day, every single practice, and I’m thankful for this opportunity every single day.”

On the offensive front line:

“My O-line did amazing, especially in the second half. They showed perseverance and they didn’t doubt themselves because of the rough first half. They were motivating me at halftime to, ‘Come on. You the one. You’re a dog. Let’s run the ball.’”

Texas A&M Commerce Head Coach Clint Dolezel

Opening statement:

"We shot ourselves in the foot a little bit there. We could have had a couple more scores, actually, so I'm a little disappointed in that. We had some changes at halftime. We thought we had a good game plan, and then we had a couple of turnovers, it snowballed a little bit and just got out of hand towards the end. I saw some good things, though. We're heading in the right direction."

On the run game:

"I thought we ran the ball pretty well. We were hoping to stay with the run. When you get three scores down, you start having to pass more. They got after us with their pass rush and started blitzing a little bit. I was pleased with the run."

On the defense:

"We got after them. There's no question that's our style of defense. We're going to get after the quarterback and make them man cover in the back. Again, we did well in the first half, and then it snowballed a bit, and we had some penalties going against us and it just got out of hand."

Closing thoughts:

"I'm disappointed. There's no doubt. I thought it was a winnable game, especially going into halftime. I thought our energy was all on our side. Again, that momentum shifted on the fumble, snapped in the end zone, and botched, and they scored a touchdown, and it got out of hand."

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