



SAN DIEGO STATE COMMUNICATIONS

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San Diego State Football Press Conference September 15, 2025

Head Coach Sean Lewis

Opening Statement:

"Everyone good. Doing great, doing great, doing great. I was excited to be back in game week here. The guys handled the bye week well. We had some good developmental time, and some good early work. Obviously, we have a great opponent coming in here as we go. Staff did an awesome job with prep and getting out and doing some recruiting and everything over the weekend, but in a good place, excited about some of the community engagement that we did as well. Everything is pointing towards a great crowd on Saturday. I know Cal's [University of California, Berkeley] is going to bring some people down, but we also did an awesome job. Hats off to our support staff, going out, and all of us kind of taking part in an effort and initiative to get out and get some tickets, engage with some different organizations and groups around the community. So have an additional just around 4000 tickets that are out to create a good environment on Saturday night. So, we need all of Aztec nation to come out and support. Going to be a great one. All right, we went out and did some school last week during the bye, got some chem [chemistry] class in, got some stats [statistics] class in to encourage our students to come out as well. Tickets on me, and we're giving away some sweet shades as well. So, students, if you would, come out, can wear shades and have a good evening. But again, excited about the opportunity to be back home for a Saturday evening kick in front of our home crowds against a really good opponent that's playing really well and is going to come in here. So, the week of preparation is obviously important for us to do that the right way and to be at our best on Saturday night.

On the lessons learned from last year's matchup against California:

"I think there's some validity to it, right? Especially defensively, there's been some nuances and some changes, probably at a granule level, right? But you can still tell that, you know, the style of ball that they want to play, particularly defensively, has consistently rang through and rang true. You know, all the years that I have coached, Wilcox has been there, so that helps, right? But again, like, it's funny, you know, you go back, and you watch that, and you see kind of the explosives that you hit, or the explosives that you missed, and you know that they're working it, and obviously we're working it. So, you know, there's that familiarity, almost like a conference foe to where you got to have enough in the repertoire that protects your main concepts with the various compliments, but also not deviate and get too far away from who you are and the concepts and the calls that you've accumulated a ton of reps on as you've gone with it."

On the challenges of facing standout freshman quarterback Jaron-Keawe Sagapolutele:

"I mean, based off the film he's got a lot of things figured out already, right? I mean, there's a calm and there's a composure to what he's doing. Again, I value the game reps. He's obviously mature beyond his years, but anytime you're able to accumulate more game reps, see more pictures, it's only going to lead to greater confidence and greater conviction in the

decision making, a greater familiarity with what they're doing within their scheme. But man, he's doing a great job with what they're asking him to do and the way that he's operating. You can tell each week as they go, you know, there's not a situation where he doesn't seem comfortable, where he doesn't seem confident, and that they don't have him operating at a high level, you know. I mean, just like shoot at the end of the first half this past week, again, opportunity for him to go execute an end of half, one minute drive, and they cut him loose, and they come away with points, right? So, he's learning, he's growing, obviously, on the job, and he's doing it at a very, very high level. So, you know, we got to do a good job, obviously, making it really tough on him."

On using the bye week to emphasis core concepts and fundamentals:

"Yeah, so fun half of the week. Put major emphasis on that as we went. Again, throughout the week, we were introducing some of Cal [University of California, Berkeley] and the things that they were doing with the information that we had through the first two weeks of their opponents. Then, being able to refine the plan over this weekend with what we had seen from the Minnesota game, and dotted the I's, crossed the T's, and we'll get into those situational specifics of it all as we move through this week. But guys did a great job. They responded properly. They've done that all along. We're eager to get back to work. They did it the right way, and looking forward to carrying that through this week of prep and doing our process better so that we can go earn better results."

On the Aztecs emphasis on ball security and not committing turnovers:

"The biggest thing that we always talk about when it comes to ball security, we have a simple phrase that ball security is job security. Like the kids and mine. It's so important, they name the game after it, so it's always a priority for something that we do. Our kids have done a great job, obviously, making that a piece of who we are. Over the long haul, there's a few, you know, key statistics that you can point to. Not to oversimplify, you know, this beautiful game, but like, if you win the turnover margin for the course of the season, generally speaking, you're going to have good success over the long haul. That's critically important in this game. Very opportunistic, defensively on their side. Generating turnovers number five [Hezekiah Masses], their corner, does an unbelievable job. There's been three games, and he has got three interceptions. He's very ball aware and very opportunistic. When he gets his hands on it, he usually does a good job securing and finishing those, so we got to do a good job within the run game obviously not fumbling it. Within the throw game, evaluating the timing and location of the throws so that we can win the turnover margin and come out positively in that regard."

Junior EDGE Trey White

On the importance of the D-line slowing down California's offense:

"When it comes to Cal, they have a really, really good freshman quarterback. I know that the D-line this week for us can affect the game a lot if we can just make them feel under constant pressure. I feel like we have a big role in this game this week. So, I'm really excited for that and for the challenge. It's kind of been slow up front compared to our standard so I'm really excited for that. They have really, good O-line and good, solid position, skill position groups and a good group of tight ends. I'm excited for the challenge, and it should be a really good game."

On drawing more attention as a pass rusher and looking for his first sack this year:

"Yeah, just facing a little bit more attention this year, just getting a lot of action away from me. But I'm not really worried about the numbers this year, as long as we're all doing our job, and I know the sacks will come, you know, like last year, I think I only had half a sack two games in. So, the sacks will come in due time. I'm not really worried about that."

On the importance of the Aztec's pass rush staying aggressive:

"You know, we just got to make the plays that come to us really and then we just got to just be relentless in our pass rush. We may not get there on the on our first move. We just got to keep on throwing those counter moves. We know the D-line is going to be a huge part in this game. We got to stop the run and force them to pass the ball, and once we get them in those third and long situations, we got to be ready to eat and be ready to make some plays."

Junior Running Back Lucky Sutton

On using the bye week to refocus after the Washington State loss:

"Yeah, like Trey said, you know, we got to focus on ourselves, focus on the little details we need to work on as a team and as a whole. We got to really focus on things we needed to work on, rather than focus on somebody else. So, it was a really good opportunities for us to get back to our basics...like we said earlier, it was just, I feel like we really beat ourselves. I feel like we needed to hone in, into our details and fundamentals, and we really didn't play to our standard this previous game. So, we really got a week, this bye week, to focus on that delve into our details, so we can be prepared for this week"

On his balance and will to run through contact:

"It's a little bit of both [balance and willpower], you know, the during the off season, I was working a lot on my balance, but also just the will and just wanted to stay up for my brothers."

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