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San Diego State Football New Mexico Bowl Press Conference December 26, 2025

Head Coach Sean Lewis

Opening Statement:

"We are definitely excited about the opportunity to compete tomorrow. It's been a first-class event all week long since we've been here. Great to share Christmas in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We appreciate Jeff and the whole committee for putting on such a first-class event and taking care of us the right way and excited for the luncheon today, but the competition tomorrow is going to be against a great North Texas team and looking forward to the opportunity to compete."

On having to prepare against one of the nation's top offensive teams:

"I mean, I don't know if you really stop or take away anything. We're going to limit all their explosive playmakers, you know, I think the team that comes out and plays fast, as you watch all these bowl games, who can start quick, who can start fast, is going to be critically important, because for us it's been close to a month since we played a ball game. So, we just want to do a great job with our communication, with our alignments, our assignments, you know, and try and impact a really good quarterback as much as possible."

On the teams focus leading up to the matchup against North Texas:

"Yeah, I mean, it didn't take a whole lot of motivation or need to get the guys attention. I mean, you know, we got two guys up here [Lucky Sutton & Owen Chambliss] that are really savvy football players. That love the process, love the prep and our teams that way as well. So they were diving into the video, as early as we were, and guys are sending messages like, "Hey, have you seen play 32 from this game? Have you seen this play? Like, what will we do to make this adjustment?" So, the guys have been dialed into everything that's been going on. It's a great matchup between their offense our defense that are two of the best in the country on either side of the ball. But not to be overlooked is their defense and our offense as well. Both of us have not gotten this position where you have the number of total wins that we have in this matchup, in this game, which is the highest outside of the CFP, where you got two good teams that know how to win a lot of different ways, and our guys have handled the prep really, really well."

On Bert Emmanuel Jr.'s preparation and building the game plan for this matchup:

"Bert's done a great job all year long of being prepared. Obviously, news has come out at the end of season about Jaden [Denegal] and his surgery and what he has battled through for the course of the season. So, BJ [Bert Emanuel Jr.] has gotten an unbelievable number of reps, and there's been lots of weeks where we didn't know what Denny's [Jayden Denegal] availability was going to be. So we've built plans, and we've had proper steps in place, and the guys mindsets have been right

to where, whether it was going to be Denny [Jayden Denegal] because it was going to be a game day decision, or it was going to be BJ [Bert Emmanuel Jr.] because he's going to be ready to go, we've navigated this in house. Obviously, it's new and it's forward facing to the public, but this is something that the guys have done a great job handling all year long. Again, we'll match and we'll build the game plan to what Bert's skill set is. He started games before, so we know we're going to give him the ball, and he's going to give us a great chance to win. I mean besides the service academies, I don't know anyone else has run the ball more than we are. So, running the football has always been a big staple of who we are and what we're about. We want to be able to win the game from the inside out and control the trenches. So obviously, Bert has a skill set that helps us accentuate what that is. But again, I think there's only a handful of teams in the country that ran it more than we did so to say that we're going to run any more, I mean, we're only stretching some margins there to run it any more than we already have this year."

Linebacker Owen Chambliss

On returning to New Mexico after last month's regular season loss:

I mean, yeah, I think, you know, we're going to take the lessons we learned from that field and try to just learn from our mistakes and not make them again. I think it's a little bit of motivation. I think every single time we face adversity this season, we've handled it well. So, I think we're just excited to get back out there and compete."

On the importance of playing in this final game of the season:

Yeah, I think it's important to play in any game. I think the bond we've created since the start of this season is extremely strong. I think we all just want to go out there and compete to be a historic team at San Diego State."

Running Back Lucky Sutton

On helping lead San Diego State back to a bowl game appearance:

You know, it's definitely a blessing to be in this position. You know, we had two seasons where we couldn't have this opportunity. So, it's a great feeling to be with this team, this 2025 team, and finally have this opportunity to play in a bowl game."

On the offense's confidence and belief in Bert Emmanuel Jr. earning the starting spot:

"You know, we built relationships throughout the whole year. We have a next man up mentality. I have true belief in any quarterback that steps up into this game, and whoever steps in, we're going to do what we have to do and control what we can control."