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San Diego State Football Press Conference Quotes

Tuesday, Oct. 30, 2018

Fowler Athletics Center

Head Coach Rocky Long

Opening statement:

"Once again another conference game, so it's very important. My estimation is it's going to be a really, really close game because that's all we play are close games. And in that case, whoever makes a play or doesn't make a play toward the end of the game will decide who wins. They've come back from a bad loss last week and they have switched some things up. I don't know what they are other than they have a new starting quarterback. The quarterback who played most of the second half in last week's game (Coltin Gerhart) is going to start for them this week. We're just guessing, but the offense is going to change a little bit, too. So on defense, we have to prepare for two different types of quarterbacks. On offense, we don't know exactly how they'll line up, but most of the time we don't know how they'll line up against us because very few people are in the I-formation anymore."

On if he's seen video on New Mexico quarterback Coltin Gerhart:

"Yeah, he played in one game last year that they won and then he played a little bit early in the season this year and then played almost the whole second half last weekend."

On the Aztecs' quarterback situation entering Saturday's game:

"Ryan Agnew is going to start, but since you asked the question, Christian Chapman will play. It hasn't been determined exactly when yet, but he will play at least one series in the first half. We'll evaluate how he looks and how he does, then develop a plan. If he's a hundred percent, then maybe even in the second half some things could change. But Ryan will start (and) somewhere in the first half Christian will go in and we'll see how he looks, see if he's a hundred percent or not."

On if Christian Chapman has been able to face the rush in practice and move laterally:

"Yeah, he looks better. I mean, out in practice he looks better. Obviously, we don't hit him, but he looks better in practice. He seems to be moving around ok. Whether he's 100 percent or not, we'll find out when things get to be full speed. We'll find out quick."

On if there's a difference on the field when each quarterback enters the game:

"No, I don't think there's a huge difference. Christian won't scramble around like Ryan does, so there won't be as many guys trying to figure out where to go to get open like they do with Ryan out there. So Christian will probably throw the ball a little bit more on time and that sort of thing."

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On if there's a difference with the offensive line when each quarterback is playing:

"No, it's no different. I mean, those passes that we've run, we'll run with Christian, too. Christian ran bootlegs and all those sorts of things, too. I will guess there'd be more drop back (passing) with Christian in there than there is with Ryan ... It's one thing to look ok in practice and it's a completely different thing to look ok when it's full speed."

On whether or not Christian Chapman would take back the starting role if he's 100 percent healthy:

"No, we're going to determine that after we see what he's like."

On where his team is physically and emotionally over the last three or four weeks:

"I think when you win and lose games, there's a lot of emotion involved ... We are who we are. We are very, very young and inexperienced, which makes us very inconsistent on the football field. But we have some young talent and we have some guys playing who were backups. They play really, really hard and they try their darnedest, but we make so many mistakes. Even when we play well, we can't play well for the whole game. We have peaks and we have valleys. When we have valleys, they (the opposition) go ahead or get back into the game and when we have peaks, we look pretty darn good. But that's not going to change. That's not changing. As soon as we lost a few guys and we started playing (a lot of) freshmen, that's what we get and that's not going to change for the rest of the year."

On whether the Aztecs' 41 passes were part of the game plan at Nevada:

"Going into the game, we thought they'd play hard at the line of scrimmage [so] that we could use [the] play-action pass and it worked very, very well. What we're not getting are big runs like we have in past. We ran the ball ok and we had some six- and seven-yard gains, maybe even an eight- or nine-yard gain running the ball. But in the past when we got our running backs into the secondary, there were at times they would break a 50- and 60-yarder for a touchdown. Since we're not getting those big plays out of the running game, you have to get one or two explosive plays to get a touchdown normally, so we're trying to get it more out of the passing game. Now, last week they did a nice job of adjusting and taking away some of our play-action passes. And we ran the ball ok, but to get an explosive play, we were trying to throw it."

On quarterback Ryan Agnew's performance since taking over at quarterback:

"I think he's played pretty well. I think he's just like the rest of the guys on our team who are not veteran players. I mean, even though he's been around a while, he hasn't played extensively until the last few weeks. He's made a lot of plays to help us win, ok. He didn't get it done last week, but he's made a plays to help us win. There are a lot of things that are keeping it close, too."

On his team's defensive performance thus far in the season:

"I think we're playing ok on defense. Statistically, we're playing really good on defense other than one thing — and that's the biggest key to us winning and losing — it's turnover ratio. We turned the ball over twice last week. One time we didn't get a score, we would've kicked a field goal right before halftime, and the other time we dropped the punt and kicked the field goal. We were lucky they only kicked a field goal, so we were still in the game. To me, that's six points right there and we only lost by four. Not that you can play a perfect game, you will turn the ball over. But we have not caused enough turnovers on defense. I think we have [seven] interceptions and we only have one fumble recovery. In the past, our turnover ratio's been really good because we don't turn it over much on offense and we've caused a bunch of turnovers on defense. But this year, we have not. I don't think we're turning it over any more on offense, but we're not causing nearly as many on defense. But yardage and those kinds of things, we're playing much better than we did last year. Points, we're playing better than we did last year. Yardage, rush defense, all those things, we're playing better than last year. We're just not causing any turnovers. We're not giving our offense a chance on a short field."

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On putting freshman Jordan Byrd back on punt returns:

"If you have one that can catch it, we'll put him back there. That's another thing, I mean, we've tried a bunch of guys back there and last week he was the one who caught it the most consistently all week long (in practice). There's a completely different way to handle a young guy as opposed to a veteran guy. When a veteran guy drops a punt, you say 'you will never be back there again.' A young guy with the kind of talent that we have in our younger and our freshmen and redshirt freshmen classes, the kind of talent that you have with those guys, when they drop a ball, you say 'hey you're not supposed to do that, go back and catch the next one.' You don't treat young guys you're developing the same way you treat a veteran guy. We've tried to get veteran guys who can catch it, but they drop them in practice. You want to put of those guys in there? I don't want to put one of those guys in there. Byrd caught every single one in practice last week."

On the keys to causing more turnovers on defense:

"I've been around for a while and that's just the way it goes. Some years you cause a bunch of turnovers, some years you don't. Just like on offense, some years you don't turn it over much and other years you turn it over a lot. Not that we don't train (for) it. We train (for) it exactly the same way. Last year and the year before when we got a whole bunch of turnovers, guess what, we've trained (for) it exactly the same way this year."

Senior defensive end Anthony Luke**On the challenges New Mexico will present on Saturday:**

"The biggest challenge is that they are fast. They're coming together as a team. It's going to be another challenge (for us). It's all about us right now. We just have to be consistent in all aspects of the game to get it rolling. They are making moves with their quarterback change. It's any given Saturday. We did not play how we needed to (last week)."

On how New Mexico quarterbacks are different:

"Honestly, I need to watch more film on them to compare the quarterbacks. I know they have a good offensive coordinator (Calvin Magee), who used to be at the University of Arizona. They run the spread, which is something we need to work on."

On playing with a chip on their shoulder after a loss:

"Always after a loss there's a chip on our shoulder. We didn't win the physical battle (against Nevada) and that's a key to San Diego State football. We always want to be physical team on the field. We need to get back to what we do best and that is to be the most physical team."

On what the defense needs to do to force more turnovers:

"Effort to the ball. If we get all 11 hats to the ball, it creates the opportunity to cause a turnover. If you put a helmet on every part of the ball carrier, you're going to have a chance to pop the ball out. I think we just need to have more effort as a unit. There was a lot of time in the game (at Nevada) that we thought the ball carrier was tackled and we let up. If we all ran to the ball and continue to the ball, we'd have more opportunities to pop the ball out. It all comes down to effort."

On if Nevada wanted it more on Saturday night:

"I think when we started the game we had a lot fire and energy. We got complacent and too comfortable with the lead. We kind of got distracted and maybe thought (getting the win was going to easy). I didn't think everyone was focused at halftime. That needs to change. We need to be able to keep the pressure up and impose our will for all four quarters of the game. That's something as a team I don't think we've done this season and we have the opportunity to be a great football team if we do."

Junior tight end Kahale Warring

On playing with a chip on their shoulder after a loss:

"None of us our team was happy about that loss. We don't take losses lightly here. We had a really high intense practice yesterday and we'll be ready for this game."

On what the team thinks about playing both quarterbacks Ryan Agnew and Christian Chapman this week:

"I don't think the team knows too much. I didn't know until recently that we were playing both. I trust both quarterbacks and I think both do a very good job. I'm OK with whatever happens. We'll just going to go make plays as a receiving corps and run the ball."

On the differences between SDSU quarterbacks Ryan Agnew and Christian Chapman:

"(Ryan) Agnew runs the ball really well. (Christian) Chapman throws a nice soft ball, which is very catchable. I think they both just do a really good job. I think whatever (the coaching staff) decides to do will be a great decision."

On how Ryan Agnew has done so far:

"I think he'd done a really good job. He's been through a lot of tough situations and got us through a lot of tough situations. There's a lot of games where if he didn't make plays at the end, we might not have won those games. Every single game we've had has been close and he's done a great job so far."

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