



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### San Diego State Football Press Conference Quotes Tuesday, Aug. 28, 2018

#### Head Coach Rocky Long

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

"Every day we get a little closer to game day, so every day we get a little more excited or a little more nervous or whatever you want to call it. As a coach you'd like to practice more, but it's time to play."

##### **On whether the team's approach differs in preparing for Stanford in the opener as opposed to an FCS team:**

"No I don't think it's any different whatsoever. We take the exact same approach preseason or preseason practice even though they shortened practices this year. We have four or five fewer practices than we did last year. Our approach and practice is exactly the same. We're trying to develop our team for the length of the season not just for one game. As always, we think our non-conference games are opportunity games. It gives us a chance to play football, it gives us a chance to get better and hopefully it gives us a chance to win a game or two."

##### **On whether any true freshmen will play on Friday:**

"We're going to take five true freshmen on the trip with us. We don't have any plans on putting them in the game right now. But we think somewhere in the season they're going to need and help us since there's a new rule that we can put them in four games and still redshirt them. I'm sure that some freshmen will play this year that wouldn't have played in the past, but right now they're down on the depth chart, so we don't count on playing this week. But if we had a couple of guys get hurt, there could be a freshman or two put in there."

##### **On the similarities between the Stanford and SDSU football programs:**

"I think we have similar philosophies. I think they want to control the ball. They want to be able to run the ball and keep their defense off the field. I think that's their philosophy, I think that's our philosophy, too. I think both programs believe that being able to run the ball is key to success. There are a lot of other people in this country that have different philosophies than we do and they win games, too. So there's not one perfect philosophy, but our philosophies are very, very similar."

##### **On how much better he thinks Stanford running back Bryce Love will be:**

"I thought Bryce Love was as good a running back as there was in the country last year. I don't know how much better he can get. You know, we're walking into a tough situation. Not only do they have him, they have a bunch of experienced players back and they're good football players. David Shaw's a great coach and he's got a real good coaching staff. There's a reason they're ranked 13th in the country. It's not because they're not any good. It's because they have a really good football team coming back with experience and good coaching. That's why they're picked 13th and they should be picked 13th."

**On why Bryce Love presents a problem to an opposing defense:**

"I've been lucky over the last couple of years to watch a bunch of good running backs and all of them have a little different athletic ability that the used to the maximum. They all have great vision, they all understand the defense because they all understand where the place is supposed to go to but they know who to look at that prevents the play from going that way, so they take it somewhere else. When they find a seam or a hole, they accelerate through it and then once they get into the open field, they can make a one-on-one tackler miss every time. So I've been lucky the last four or five years. I've watched a whole bunch of great running backs and he's a great running back. He has all those qualities."

**On how to game-plan against a player like Bryce Love:**

You want the truth, right? You do not. You put your guys in as good a position as you can put them in, so that you're not out-numbered and then your guys have to play well. When you have an outstanding athlete in a position, he will win most one-on-one situations. If he was a wide receiver, you could game-plan to take him away. All you have to do is double-team them, underneath, over the top, outside-inside, you can take them away. You cannot take a great running back away. There's no way to defense a great running back other than not being out-numbered or out-positioned in the blocking scheme. We will not be out-positioned or out-numbered on the blocking scheme. Whether we can tackle him or not, that is up for question. So there is no legitimate way to stop a great running back other than your line of scrimmage is better than their line of scrimmage."

**On whether it's critical for the linebackers to fill the gaps in order to offset Stanford's size advantage on the offensive line:**

"When you play a great player and he's at the running back position, it's critical for all 11 guys to play well. But if the guys up front can hold the line of scrimmage and demand double-team blocks, you have a much better chance. If the front guys, the guys at the line of scrimmage cannot demand double-team blocks, you have no chance whatsoever of stopping them. It's a simple game. In the way that these two teams play, it's simpler than normal. There are no magic answers when you have a great player on the other side other than your line of scrimmage is better than their line of scrimmage."

**On whether he thinks Stanford will be out for revenge after losing to the Aztecs last year:**

"I don't think you develop a rivalry in two games. I don't know what coach Shaw's opinion of that is, but my opinion is there's no such thing as revenge in athletics. They've got a great football team and we're going to come in and we're going to play as hard as we can play. And after the first snap if you had that factor as a motivation, it is over in football because you run into each other. Once you violently run into each other, all of that stuff is out the window."

**On his concerns heading into Friday's game:**

"The concern is that we're inexperienced and they are not. The last two years we've had a veteran mature old football team around here and now we have a young inexperienced football team around here. We're playing a very veteran experienced football team that is really good at the same time. So I have concerns with our immaturity as a football team."

**On the expectations of running back Juwan Washington:**

"I think we expect to Juwan to have a great year. One game does not mean he's not going to have a great year. But we expect Juwan to have a good year because he's a very talented running back in his own right. He actually has a veteran offensive line in front of him."

**On Stanford head coach David Shaw's praise of Juwan Washington:**

"I think Juwan played enough last year that in the off-season coaches watch every game from the year before especially when they're your first opponent, so he's seen a lot of Juwan. I'm not exactly sure how many carries Juwan had last year, but Juwan had a lot of carries. So (Shaw has) seen a lot of him. He knows he has some abilities and he knows he's a good player."

**On other challenges Stanford poses besides Bryce Love:**

"I think our biggest challenge is trying to decide on how many people you want to put near the line of scrimmage and how willing you are to be one-on-one with some really big, good wide receivers on the outside. I don't think you can. You going to try and completely stop the running game? I've watched every one of their (game) films from last year, too. Even those (teams) that put 10 guys at the line of scrimmage give up big runs because the offensive line is pretty good and there are seams in there. The running back is so good that he finds the seam and he goes 90 yards for a touchdown even when they put 10 or 11 guys up there. So they're still going to run the ball, but they have a couple of quality receivers and they're big guys. They have a 6-foot-7 tight end (Colby Parkinson) that they put out at wide receiver to throw him fade routes and stuff like that. So they can put the big guys out there and if you want to put nine or 10 guys near the line of scrimmage to try to stop the run, then they've got a huge advantage out there one-on-one against the 5-foot-10 corner. Now you have to decide on (whether) are you willing to try to slow the run down in order to take a one-on-one chance on the outside."

**Senior defensive tackle Noble Hall**

**On the difficulty of dealing with the size advantage along Stanford's offensive line:**

"It's going to be a battle for us, but I feel like we've been doing the right things to get ourselves prepared for that technique. I feel like we have a good scheme on defense, so I think we'll be able to handle it pretty well."

"We played them last year and I felt we did a good job against them. Played (Arizona State). But besides that, playing them like we did, I think we can do it again this year."

**On finally playing a game instead of practicing against teammates:**

"(It's) crazy exciting. We waited a whole year to see these guys again. I know they've been thinking about us, we've been thinking about them the whole year. We're ready. We've been working since January 24th for this."

**On defeating two Pac-12 opponents last season:**

"It meant a lot. This program has been built up from nothing, so I feel like us beating both of those teams last year really made a statement for us. We can play with anybody, nothing is impossible for us to do if we put our minds to it as a team and buy in as a program."

**On the difference between Bryce Love and Rashaad Penny:**

"I wouldn't say there's really much of a difference. They both have great speed and like to hit the edge and just get out of there. I wouldn't really say there's much of a crazy difference. Maybe the size of the two ... (Love) was the fastest person I played against last year."

**Junior tight end Parker Houston**

**On preparing for a football game during the first week of classes:**

"Both of us being older guys we've found ways to do it. We've been in school for a long time and you find ways to cope with starting school and getting ready for a game. But usually the first week is kind of like the introduction week where you meet professors, maybe go into some light assignments, which makes it easier. We just find our way."

**On finally playing a game instead of practicing against teammates:**

"We're tired of hitting each other. We're excited to hit somebody else in a different color uniform . . . Our defense schemes our offensive plays, so it would be nice to hit somebody else. But hitting each other makes each other better. It's just preparing for the next thing.

**On getting nervous before a game:**

"I feel like if you don't have butterflies, something is wrong. I get butterflies before every game no matter who we're playing, no matter what game it is. But as soon as that first hit, that first kickoff, first kick return it's go time.

**On defeating two Pac-12 opponents last season:**

"Being a Mountain West team and beating two Pac-12 teams, it's not only a boost for our school, but it's a boost for the conference showing that we're not going to be bullied by some of these bigger teams."

**On providing leadership to the rest of the team:**

"Two guys that have been here, David Wells and Nick Bawden, were two huge leaders that we lost and they seemed to always bring something to practice every day, so I'm trying to replace that, bring the juice, bring the energy every day. You feel a little more comfortable because we've always been the best in our high schools and you just kind of get back into that role where you're the leader again. You've got to do what's right, you just got to show what's right and go out there and play."

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