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SDSU Football vs. Eastern Michigan – Postgame Quotes September 22, 2018

San Diego State Head Coach Rocky Long

Thoughts on the win?

COACH LONG: "Thoughts on the win. Uh, we won."

How is Juwan [Washington]?

COACH LONG: "You know, I'm not sure. The doctors seem really positive that he's going to be okay. He strained something in his upper chest. So I think they x-rayed it, but I'm sure they'll MRI it and all that to find out. But the doctors talked positive but they didn't say for sure. I'm sure they'll find out by tomorrow afternoon."

Did John [Baron] tell you he was confident he could make that one?

COACH LONG: "No. I told him after the game that I was mad that he missed the one. But I forgive him. Because he made those two at the end."

What were your thoughts on Chase Jasmin's performance?

COACH LONG: "I thought he did okay. You gotta give Eastern Michigan a lot of credit for how well they played the run. You know, they schemed up a few things that helped them. But they hung in there tough just like I told you whenever we had our press conference. I told you were they were that kind of team. I don't know why you didn't believe me then. But I told you those teams from that league, they're just like us -- they'll play hard, they'll play physical and they'll play it till the end. And they don't have the bells and whistles that the Power 5 guys do, but they love playing football. So no matter where they finish in their league in all those sort of things or where we finish in our league in all those sort of things, we're the same people. And whenever those two groups get together, guess what, it's going to be a hard, tough, physical football game. And that's the way this works. We might play some guys that are so talented that we can't get them into a physical game. But they're just like us."

Do you think Washington not being out there in the second half affected the team mentally?

COACH LONG: "I don't think so. I think our team is pretty mentally tough. Him not being out there at full strength probably hurt our performance a little bit."

Thoughts on the interception in overtime?

COACH LONG: "It was a great play because it was Darren Hall and he's young. A veteran cornerback will do that, which means he has a chance to be pretty good. Where they run a corner route -- we have a deep pass safety and they run a corner route behind the corner,

and they run an out right in front of the corner because they're trying to attract the rookie to jump the route, and they throw the corner behind him for the big gain. Well, veteran cornerbacks try to bait them. They try to act like they're driving the out and then they feather back into the corner. And they're taking a chance because if it's a perfect pass he probably can't make that play. But every once in a while they don't throw a perfect pass and he made a perfect play. He made a veteran play. He baited him in like he was driving to the out and feathered back into the corner route and caught the ball, so that was a great play."

Did you say anything to the team after that early whistle and obviously the whole stadium is booing and there's frustration? Did you have to tell the team anything or did they bounce back on their own?

COACH LONG: "No, I hope we always are this, we pride ourselves on not worrying about the officials. I mean, they made a terrible call. Might have cost us the game. But it's one of those things -- I made a critical mistake this year; I sent some things into the conference office that I thought they missed some calls on and they protect each other. So it doesn't matter. I could show you the same calls and you would agree with me, but they don't agree, because they protect each other."

What did you see differently from the first half to the second half?

COACH LONG: "I think the critical part of the game was right at the end [of the first half]. I mean, we should have come in at halftime with a 14-point lead. But our young quarterback made a terrible decision and threw an interception with enough time on the clock that they were able to run down the field and score right before halftime. If you take last week's game and this week's game, the exact same thing happened last week but it was the momentum for us. This was the momentum against us. The other team went into the halftime with great momentum on their side and they came out and played -- they played better, their team played better in the second half. I think our team played about the same but their team played better. And so they made it a game. So I think the critical part was right there at the end of the first half."

Thoughts on quarterback Mike Glass coming in?

COACH LONG: "It took us a little while to get used to him, yes. Yes, it did. And I thought we played the other guy really good. And then when Glass came in, I thought his ability to move around and not get hit and making plays with his feet and giving themselves open lanes to throw in, I thought it took us a long time. We might never have gotten into him except Darren Hall baited him into throwing the corner that he intercepted. The rest of the game we didn't adjust well to him."

And also, I mean, sure there's a strong arm a couple times --

COACH LONG: "I was disappointed watching warm-ups because when I watched the film, I thought the starter had the better arm. When I watched them in warm-ups, No. 9 had the better arm. So I was very disappointed when I saw that."

What was the reasoning for the onside kick after the first score?

COACH LONG: "It wasn't an onside kick. (Laughter). Now, this is maybe overcoaching or something. Up until our game they've been fair-catching everything, okay. And we're kind of proud of how we cover kickoffs. So we were supposed to be squibbing that and trying to get to the back guy so they had to return it. Well, John Baron hit it right at one of their guys. He was supposed to hit it over the front line and then have it bounce crazy back in the back end so maybe they'd have a hard time fielding it and maybe we could cause something good for us to happen. It was a heck of a plan until it didn't work."

How about the field position you guys got after they go ahead and then did a short kick themselves, are you happy to see that?

COACH LONG: "If you -- and it's going to be interesting to watch the film. On the sidelines it looks to me like we should have popped two kickoff returns for touchdowns and that's where we probably missed Juwan there more than we did at tailback because I think at least one of those, maybe both of them, if it's Juwan Washington back there, they're touchdowns. So I think they saw the same thing I did and that's why they squibbed it because they didn't want the possibility of one of those popping out."

How important was it for Kyree to come back and force that fumble after having a couple of struggles earlier?

COACH LONG: "Well, I think -- I don't know if it was Kyree. I think it was Ron Smith. Wasn't it Ron Smith that got the sack? It was Kyree? It's in there that it's Kyree. I mean it's in here as Kyree. Now I've got the film and I know which corner plays which side. I actually know which corner plays which side. So I'm not going to dispute it until I have proof. But I think it was Ron Smith, I think. I think it was Ron Smith."

How important was that play?

COACH LONG: "I thought it was really important because they were in scoring range and it was a third-down play and obviously the fumble got us the ball and got us the momentum."

You kind of gave yourselves a gift going into the bye week, taking a deep breath getting ready for the conference, what are your thoughts?

COACH LONG: "I think we have to get a lot better. I think if we want to make a run for the conference championship, we have to become a lot better team. But we're playing about like I thought we would. I mean, we have a young coaching staff and we have very young players. So being consistent and good is really hard for both of those groups. I thought we were going to struggle. Sooner or later we have to stop struggling and play more like a veteran team than we are now."

How much more of a challenge does it come losing a couple of starters?

COACH LONG: "Makes it a lot harder, losing a starting quarterback and losing your best defensive lineman and now we lost Tim Wilson for this game; he should be back for the next one. We lost him for this game. He was playing really, really good. We had four or five guys on the sidelines tonight that are starters. So not only are you young and you lose starters, obviously you're not going to play very consistently and probably not play very well. I'll go back, maybe it was Kyree. Was it Kyree for sure? No, it might be, because tonight if you noticed we played a lot more corners tonight than we have in the past. So I mean we had four corners playing tonight where we've only had two in the past and they were playing both sides. It might have been Kyree. I called the defense. I don't know who ran it."

SDSU Senior Defensive Lineman Anthony Luke & Redshirt Freshman Safety Darren Hall

Darren, what did you see on the interception?

DARREN HALL: "Before the play, my teammate Tariq Thompson, was like, 'What's the route formation?' Either out in corner or a dig in the post. So expect the corner because I'm going to be there on the post. We were in cover two. They ran it. I sunk under the seven and I picked it off."

What was the difference between the first and second half? Seemed like the first half you guys were dominating the line of scrimmage. And the second half they came back a little bit. Was there something that changed?

ANTHONY LUKE: "I think the momentum before halftime is what changed. They did a good job before halftime using that interception to carry on with that momentum and score. And just like when we played Arizona State, we scored right before halftime and set the momentum for the second half. So that's part of football."

Darren, could you talk about that interception what that means to you giving back the ball to your offense?

DARREN HALL: "It means a lot. It was a great game. Eastern Michigan played a great game. I was just going out there trying to make a play and just win the game for us."

How big were those fourth-down stops for you on defense?

ANTHONY LUKE: "Extremely big. They were already in field goal range on one of them, and they could have put more points on the board. We had a few more that they could have used as momentum to put more points on the board, so any fourth-down stops at any part of the game it's pretty big."

How did you adjust on defense after they changed quarterbacks from Wiegers to Glass?

ANTHONY LUKE: "Both quarterbacks were good. We knew when No. 9 was in the game he likes to run the ball so we had to collapse the pocket more. We knew you can't really rush up field with No. 9 because he's really fast. So if you rush too far up field he's going to step in the pocket and come inside and run. So we just adjusted a little bit and knew we had to compress the pocket, stay tight."

What's this win mean for you guys?

ANTHONY LUKE: "Just any other win to us. We just need to use it to go into this bye week and become better, get better. Keep improving and learn from our mistakes."

DARREN HALL: "It was a good team win, but we have a bye week to get better. We have going to conference play after the bye week, so get ready and play better before we play them."

Couple long receptions for them, what happened?

DARREN HALL: "Sometimes the receiver just runs a good route, and the quarterback throws a good ball. We try to be in the best coverage we can be but sometimes a better route to the ball beats us."

ANTHONY LUKE: "Defensive line on those need to get to the quarterback also. So our DBs don't have to cover for a long time. So that's on the "D" line. That's not on the DBs, that's on "D" line, that's on linebackers. We just need to get there faster on those deep balls."

What did them switching quarterbacks do for you guys, did you game plan for Glass at all?

ANTHONY LUKE: "We game planned for both quarterbacks. It was just football. We just have to overcome adversity and even changing the quarterback is a little bit of adversity because you can't really focus all week on just like one dude. We knew that No. 9 was going to play a lot actually because we watched the last game, we watched Purdue. And in the Buffalo game, No. 9 actually played a lot more. So we paid attention."

Do you feel his skills kind of gave them a spark a little bit?

ANTHONY LUKE: "They're both good quarterbacks. I think they just took advantage of the opportunities that they had. So could have been 12, could have been 9 in there, they both could make that, the passes they made on that. So we just need to stop it. We just need to adjust and the "D" line needs to get there we just need to do our job."

DARREN HALL: "We game planned for both of them like he said, but usually they ride the quarterback that's doing better. He was doing better this game so he stayed in and we just had to adjust to his game style as we did."

What would you say was his game style, like how would you describe it?

DARREN HALL: "He's a more of a scramble quarterback. He can stay back in the pocket of course and throw it because he had some good passes today. But he's more of like -- I see him as a scramble quarterback. He's more of a read option quarterback. He'll pull it down more than 12 will, but 12 is more of a stay back in the pocket and throw the ball."

SDSU Junior Quarterback Ryan Agnew & Senior Kicker John Baron II

The game winner was good?

JOHN BARON: "Yeah, it was awesome."

What was your mindset, just like any other kick on that, or did you feel a little something extra?

JOHN BARON: "It was definitely nerve-racking. It was a pressure kick, but I'm happy it went in."

And on the one you missed?

JOHN BARON II: "Which one? I don't even remember. I don't know what you're talking about. (Laughter)."

Was there any feeling of redemption after missing one earlier and then making?

JOHN BARON II: "Yeah, definitely a feeling of redemption. A feeling of relief. That team was really good and they came here to play here tonight. And I'm happy we pulled it off."

John, how do you kind of come back -- you look like you pulled the one you missed. So how do you kind of come back from that mentally as far as the next preparation to kick?

JOHN BARON II: "You just have to have a quick memory. You've got to forget about it. That's part of the job. You've just got to move on. There's nothing you can do about that when it happens and it definitely isn't a good thing. It sucks. You feel like you hurt the team. But it always feels good when you get another chance and get to go out there and redeem yourself."

John, how many times have you found yourself in that spot at the end to win a game like that?

JOHN BARON II: "In college? One time, really. In overtime like that, that's my first time."

Do you kind of relish being in a position like that to win a game?

JOHN BARON II: "You always want to help the team. So when that opportunity comes, you always want to make the most out of it and help the team the best way you can, but I mean you don't really -- you don't yearn for that moment all the time. But if it comes, definitely want to be ready and that's what our job is."

Was there more pressure on the kick before that because it was longer and you've got to make that?

JOHN BARON II: "That was -- that was a scary kick just because we went out there and the snap was high. We were kind of rushed. And then Brandon (Heicklen) put it down and I'm looking at the ball and it was just straight laces in my face. So I just was like just hit the ball, and I put my foot through and the rest is history."

Wasn't that the tougher end?

JOHN BARON II: "Not that late at night. There's no wind or anything. It's pretty calm."

The field is pretty chewed up. What were you looking at when you went out there? Did it surprise you first of all and was there any concern?

JOHN BARON II: "Before every game you walk the field, you get a feel for how it is, where you're going to kick off, how the field looks. You kind of multiply that by ten by the end of the game and it's like everywhere on the field it's pretty tore up. That's what you get when you play on grass. But you don't think about that."

You smiled when I first started to ask that. It did look different, though, than even at the end of last game. Did you look at it and think: What the heck happened?

JOHN BARON II: "No, I didn't think [that]. You expect it when you play on grass like that. We're a run team. So you expect the field to be pretty tore up. So it wasn't surprised or anything."

Ryan, what's it like to have a weapon like John Baron on your team when you know that you could bog down in a big, big situation like that and have somebody like that?

RYAN AGNEW: "It means the world, especially in these situations. John's one of the best that I've ever seen kick the football. And he's the captain of our football team and you can see why he's the captain. In pressure situations he rose to the challenge. He missed that one kick but we also had the most confidence in him. When we went down, we gave him the 51-yarder, I didn't even really sweat it that much because I knew J.B. was going to make it."

Ryan, why do you think you had so many struggles in the second half trying to get on the scoreboard?

RYAN AGNEW: "Eastern Michigan is a great football team. First and foremost their defense came to play. They had a great plan. They swarmed to the football and we've got to give hats off to them. But all that matters is we made a couple more plays than them."

In the first half, you obviously played pretty well, too. Two touchdown passes. Talk a little bit about that.

RYAN AGNEW: "Great play calls. Coaches put us in a great situation. We have been working all week. They told us what was going to happen, what they think is going to happen. The receivers executed great. The o-line blocked tremendous. The running backs blocked, the tight ends blocked. And my job is just to get it in the hands of the playmakers. And it's a lot easier when they're wide open especially (BJ) Busbee and Parker (Houston), I put it where they can catch it and the rest is history."

What happened on the interception?

RYAN AGNEW: "Terrible decision by me. I can't do that especially with coming into half. We have all the momentum up 17-3. Just terrible decision by me. That's all my fault."

Looked like you were expecting somebody to be there. Is that where somebody should have been there but you still looked at it and not thrown the ball?

RYAN AGNEW: "I just, third and 10, bad stick. Before the half. Should have either thrown it away, try to find another read but that's obviously my fault."

Overall, how do you think the offense played tonight?

RYAN AGNEW: "I think the offense played well enough to get the victory. And that's all that really matters when we go and watch the film. Then we go see where we need to improve, but when we get one more point it's successful for us."

Do you do something in the second half to stop the ball?

RYAN AGNEW: "Like I said, they're a great football team. Hats off to them. They really played well and they really came wanting to win and I think honestly why they played so in the second half I threw that interception gave them all the momentum. If I didn't throw that interception, we go up by two scores. Could have been a whole different ballgame the second half and J.B. wouldn't have had to save the day. But hindsight is 20/20. I'm glad for the victory."

John, on the game winner there, you kind of happy they centered it up for you right in the middle?

JOHN BARON II: "Every Thursday we practice that like those exact moments and pressure kicks and that type of stuff. So I was really happy that they did. But, yeah, it wasn't something that I haven't seen before or anything like that. It was all planned."

I don't want to put you on the spot but do you have any idea what it's going to take to win a Groza award or win an All-American win, is it too political to even guess?

JOHN BARON II: "No, I don't get caught up in that stuff I try to help my team win, make kicks, I don't think about that stuff."

Eastern Michigan Head Coach Chris Creighton

Opening Statement:

"Well it's the second in week in a row congratulating the other team on a great game. First time competing out here, first time against San Diego State. They are a first-class program and a great football team. I thought they played very well. There's bitter disappointment in our locker room right now. I asked our guys to bring energy tonight and I asked them to play very physical and to do that for three and a half hours and I believe our guys did. We came up short."

On the interception in overtime:

"It was a great play. It was an over-under and the corner came off of the hitch underneath and made a great play on the corner route."

On your two quarterbacks' play tonight:

"I thought they played pretty well. We can't ever turn the ball over and quarterbacks learn to take the responsibility for that, but I thought they were both great leaders tonight and both did some really great things, just not enough to win."

On your defense's performance:

"I just think that our defensive staff put together a great plan against an outstanding run game. I'm going to take a look at the stats and watch the film. We had a number of big plays, tackles for loss and pressured the quarterback. Our front really came to play."