



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

5500 CAMPANILE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO, CA 92182 | (619) 594-5547

GOAZTECS.COM | @GOAZTECS | @AZTECSPR | #GOAZTECS

### San Diego State Baseball Press Conference Quotes January 29, 2019

#### San Diego State Head Coach Mark Martinez

##### **Opening Statement:**

"We're coming off our fifth championship in the last six years, so we're in a good place moving into the 2019 season. We've lost some key ingredients, we're going to have to replace some key components – losing Chase Calabuig, Dean Nevarez, Jordan Verdon, David Hensley, those guys have kind have been mainstays the last three or four years. Now we have to upgrade the program from where they were and that's the idea that went into recruiting this class. Upgrading the athleticism – not that those guys were bad – but trying to get better in order to win a regional. I think that's the next step for our program is to get into a regional, continue to play in the postseason, and the next step is to win a regional and give us an opportunity to play past a regional, into a Super Regional and get to Omaha. That's the expectation of our program, to play for a national championship and we're working on it. So we've upgraded in a lot of areas, starting with Logan Boyer being our Friday night guy, he can run the ball up there anywhere from 94-96 miles per hour, the key with him is having a Friday night role and that means he needs to get deep into games in order to pass the baton off to the very strong pitching staff. So we're very excited about our pitching staff moving into this year, it's an experienced staff with Logan anchoring the Friday night position and Harrison Pyatt on Saturdays and a graduate transfer from USC, Brad Wegman. So, pretty good pitching, we have a great closer in freshman All-American Casey Schmitt, he had a 0.28 (ERA) last year, only gave up one run and that was on an intentional walk. He's going to be our closer, we have a wealth of pitching whether it's experienced guys or new guys coming into our program, we're very excited about that and replacing some of those key components. Losing Dean Nevarez who has caught for the last two seasons and won some rings, Ryan Orr and Joe Fitzhugh are kind of battling that (starting catcher position) out, first base, we have to replace Jordan Verdon who played just about every game his first three years so we're doing that with a freshman in Brian Leonhardt coming from Eastlake (HS). Our middle infield is going to look a little different as well. We have a graduate transfer at shortstop, fifth-year senior Angelo Armenta from USC. Mike Jarvis, is a transfer from Saddleback Junior College, we also have Jacob Maekawa who played every game at second base last year, so those two guys are kind of competing for that job and of course Casey Schmitt. Our outfield is very strong, we have Julian Escobedo playing centerfield, Matt Rudick, who should have been a freshman All-American and hit .319 as a freshman, will be in left field. I skipped right field, we haven't figured that out yet. The idea is to upgrade athletically to compete on a national level. We've found that out the past couple of years, when we won our first championship in 2013, we were extremely excited, it was awesome, we hadn't won in many, many years. 2014, sort of the same thing, we pulled some strings and smoke and mirrored a little bit. 2015 we made some noise up at Lake Elsinore, we had a bad year in 2016 and the last couple years we've figured out we have to figure out how to compete nationally. That (includes) upgrading our athleticism, running ability, and of course, the pitching piece has upgraded drastically. So we're very excited about that heading into the season.

##### **On how specifically the team has upgraded athletically:**

"Number one, speed, obviously, but I think its batting ability, making more contact and creating havoc offensively. I think that's a big deal for us, we have an upgraded offense and we want our guys to run and create havoc and those kinds of things. The other thing is making big plays defensively and the only way you can do that is being very athletic. We've done a great job making the routine plays and that translates into a lot of wins but to win at the next level you have to make a lot of those dynamic plays in big moments. We lost a game at Long Beach (in 2017) against Long Beach State and we got beat athletically and it kind of lost us a game. Same thing last year when we played LSU, we were in a position to win that game and we got beat athletically. I think upgrading that point is not to say the guys before were bad players by any means,

it's just kind of upgrading in order to compete at the national level. We feel like we should be the favorite to win the conference every single year, not just now, but every single year. It's kind of where we've put the program and the next piece is we feel that that is a team that can make some noise not only regionally but nationally.

**On if the team goes into a season with a chip on their shoulder:**

"Absolutely. I think I don't know if it's like the New England Patriots where people are sort of disrespecting them so to speak, I think it's more that the culture of our baseball program has grown to a point where we expect to win the conference. But the next step is that we're going in with purpose at a regional. I think we're trying to get rid of that happy – it's great to win championships – don't get me wrong, but get past that fake finish line of winning a conference tournament and get past that regional. We feel like we're getting to that point. It's been a long process, I've been here going on my 14<sup>th</sup> year and my fifth year as head coach it's been a big, long process to change the culture of the program and the mindset. We expect to win the conference year-in and year out, we're not hoping to win that thing – we expect to win it. The next piece is that we're putting our program in a position to win a regional."

**On the team's philosophy in recruiting transfers:**

"I think our program has culturally been built on recruiting high school kids. That's kind of where we got to the point that we're bringing in the right fit. I think there are times where you get as a program that you have to plug in some holes and I think that's what we've done. The transfer piece in baseball currently right now even if you wanted to transfer, you still have to sit out a year, so it's difficult and mirrors what basketball does. It's difficult to do that in our sport, to wait a year for a guy to come in so graduate transfers make sense because they're eligible right away. The junior college transfers, we kind of sprinkle those in on the mound and in this case this year we found a really dynamic player and local product in Mike Jarvis to come in and upgrade our athleticism. He's a dynamic runner. We don't really rely too heavily on the transfer piece unless it's a necessity. So, the two guys from USC (Brad Wegman and Angelo Aremnta), we're very fortunate to get them. They're coming from a pretty good program, but they're here to take advantage of a pretty good opportunity for them personally and hopefully help our team reach our goals as well.

**On how Logan Boyer has handled injuries:**

"He's had some challenges and he's handled it great. I think the decision to stay back this past summer and even over the winter break – we have our guys go on a winter break and our pitchers take some time off – he made a decision to keep going and keep grinding because he didn't want to have to restart the engines coming back this spring. His first couple outings this spring have been exceptionally good. I will tell you our first two intersquad weekends, I'm a really bad hitting coach. I keep reminding Joe Oliveira that we're facing a pretty good pitching staff. That is humbling when you face the guys we're seeing week in and week out. Today we're going to face four more really good pitchers in our intersquad. We have to manage that mentally and continue to tell our hitters that we're pretty good even though they're facing some really good dynamic pitching. On Friday night – I don't know how many innings we played total, maybe eight – and we had two hits on both sides, so it's a pretty good pitching staff. That might help us moving forward, I don't think we'll be afraid to face anybody either."

**San Diego State junior RHP Logan Boyer**

**On the team's high expectations this season:**

"I think that the big part is that we're not going into it knowing we're going to win but expecting to win, because of what has previously happened throughout the years and the guys this year understand after the fall that we're going into the season a lot stronger. I think that's where the expectation of winning conference championships is coming from.

**On his role being the Friday night starter:**

"It's very humbling, but I'm excited the season off well and give the team a good start to every weekend."

**On how he feels physically heading into the season:**

"I'm very excited, everything feels healthy, I feel strong. I stayed back this summer and lifted a lot with our strength and conditioning coach, and there have been no problems – I'm ready to go."

**On how he's dealt with injuries throughout his first couple of collegiate seasons:**

"I wouldn't call it hard, I'd call it different and you have to learn how to accept it for what it is and go about your business. You can focus on the past, but rather help yourself for the future."

**-SDSU-**