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**San Diego State Football
Virtual Press Conference Quotes
Monday, Nov. 23, 2020**

Head Coach Brady Hoke

Opening Statement

"We had plenty of opportunities to win the football game on Saturday. We've got to take advantage of them. We have to perform a little better, coach a little better. The second half seems to be a little bit of an issue with us right now from an offensive standpoint. We're re-assessing some things in our preparation, which I think are going to be really good to help us. We had some penalties, we had four penalties on defense on one the scoring drives. We've got to play smarter... Obviously, the guys played hard. I was excited about that part. We had some guys missing as you know. Some guys got hurt during the game, and we hope to have everyone back this weekend."

On missing several key players at Nevada, including team captains:

"Some of the best leaders on the team, they're captains for a reason. DJ (Dwayne Johnson Jr.), his grandmother had passed, and it was important for him and important for us that he be there with his dad in Charleston (S.C). We hope to get (William) Dunkle back soon. Andrew (Aleki) was out last week and should be back. He's a great energy (player) for us. Lucas (Johnson), after a day or two off, we'll get him going again and Greg Bell. I think Dom (Gudino) is the only guy, and another important guy, who won't be back yet."

On the process of determining the next opponent now that the Fresno State game has been canceled:

"I know for a fact that (athletic director) JD (Wicker) has been working hard, really since the end of last week not knowing what the situation was with Fresno State. I think JD has contacted a lot of people. Obviously, if it could be a Mountain West (game), it would be preferable for everybody, but we'll see. I've said this before, we'll play anybody. We just want the opportunities to play. Our guys work too hard in the off-season, they work too hard during fall camp not to have the opportunities to play football games."

On addressing the team's inconsistency in the second half of recent games:

"The one thing, and Jeff (Hecklinski) and I have had this discussion, is you always have openers when you start a football game. You script openers, and that might be 10 to 15 or 10 to 18 different scenarios that you're going to start with. At halftime, you assess what worked well and what you think you can do to a defense. But we're going to go out in the second half and have the same kind of openers, and I think that's going to help us because it will give our guys a little bit more clarity on exactly what we want to call during that part of the second half."

On scheduling a new opponent, whether it's a Mountain West or Pac-12 team, on such on short notice:

"I'm not in the middle of those conversations, but I think our athletic director is going to be very aggressive. As long as the health and safety protocols are going to be met for our players and for our opponent's players, we'll try and play anybody."

On Lucas Johnson's performance vs. Nevada:

"I thought in the first half he played very, very well. I thought he ran the offense. I thought he was accurate. I thought he pulled the ball when he needed to pull it. Obviously, he was slowed down a little bit in the second half, and we've got to overcome that offensively. He

slowed down with the hamstring and the cramping that was going on. But I was really happy that he got back into the football game. Now we just got to work on him getting healthy."

On whether Lucas Johnson will remain the starting quarterback:

"I think as the week progresses, they'll both (Johnson and Carson Baker) be taking opportunities, but right now he's our starter."

On whether last Saturday's second-half performance was due to Nevada making defensive adjustments:

"They really didn't do anything. I think when you look at the tape from the first half to the second, they really didn't make any adjustments. I think we needed to block a little better. I think not having Greg (Bell) to some extent hurt a little bit. We feel confident with Chance (Bell) and Jordan (Byrd). But not having (Lucas) at full speed took a little bit away from him pulling the ball and zone reads."

On the possibility of moving the BYU game to this weekend:

"I would say there's been a little bit of banter, but nothing that has been taken a whole lot further. Again, JD is doing those things. We would look at any opportunity for just for our guys to play."

On the ideal number of practice days to prepare for an unknown opponent:

"With the practice days, it's more of the mental (aspect). Because if I'm an offensive guard and I'm blocking on 3-technique, that doesn't change. Or if I'm a defensive lineman and I'm going to play in the tilt, how I'm going to work my hands and my feet, that doesn't change. The only thing that changes is we want to do this defensively to attack what they do. It's really getting those reps at whatever that may be. Same thing offensively. If we see something mismatched possibly or one of those kinds of things, it's more of the mental than the physical. Because playing fundamental football is playing fundamental football . . . I don't think we or anybody we play would say, hey, a day from now we're going to play. But I think you get enough looks at them on tape. Two or three days."

On how the pandemic situation has changed Thanksgiving plans for this year:

"We'll do something as a team for sure on Thursday. The guys who live in San Diego County, they'll have the opportunity to go visit (family). But if you're not from the county, because of quarantine and everything else when you come back, we're going to try and keep them busy as much as we can and try and take care of them. We're thankful we have the guys that we have on our team."

On people who engage in so-called schedule shaming of certain schools:

"I would say this is more how we feel as a university and as a staff, and that is giving every opportunity for our players to play. They put too much into it. Again, safety (and) health are all included in that. You know what they do during January and February, spring football and in the summer. Heck, they work way too hard not to have an opportunity to play. We want to play, period. Our guys want to play . . . Maybe I didn't say it well enough, but we want to play and win."

On the team's fortunate progress of making it through the fall so far without any COVID-19 cases:

"We give a lot of thought to it, I can assure you of that. Our guys have stayed very vigilant, and we talk about it. It's communicated every day. I'm sure they're tired of me saying put your mask on, wash your hands, socially distance, all those things. We've tried to do as good of a job of communicating the accountability approach for the young guys to the seniors who are playing their last year of football, most of them. That has always been one of our messages since I've been a head coach. But in these times, there's a little bit more that we have to do to make sure we give these guys the opportunity to play. Is it lucky? Probably to some degree. But the players on this football team, our medical staff, our administration, the coaches, I give them a lot of credit because of how we have gone through this to this point. Now in saying that, you can do as well as you can and all of a sudden something happens. We've been fortunate that hasn't happened and we hope it doesn't."

On whether the weekend of the Mountain West Championship could have other conference teams playing games:

"I would think so. Bowl games are going to be starting, I can tell you that. Again, this is probably a better question for JD (Wicker) than me. But I think there's no doubt with the opportunities that are out there, yeah, we want to keep playing."

On whether the team would want to play Washington in Seattle on short notice if the Huskies were available:

"To answer that part of the question, yes, in a heartbeat. . . Believe me JD knows that we want to play. We don't care who we play, but we want to play football. . . Hopefully, we're going to hear something sooner than later."

On whether the team thinks that this season isn't any less special compared to other years:

"I don't think there's any doubt. I think our guys have really been focused. Part of that is they were lifting out there at 6 a.m. this morning. They were out there on the turf field getting after it. They had a lot of energy, so I feel good about their attitude."

On whether there's a certain excitement this week due to the possibility of playing an unknown team:

"I would say that's probably true. I've been more excited about other things, but I think there's no doubt that number one, we all got tested yesterday and today and the results have been good. We're going to meet with them today and go over some game film and we'll practice tomorrow."

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