 **San Diego State Head Coach Brady Hoke**

**Opening Statement:**

“Like always, we appreciate you all for coming out. It’s not fun for any of us but there’s been some things in the last 72 hours that have gone on that we’ll try to clarify as much as we can and address the game itself– meaning coaching changes, and then Hawai’i. Starting with Boise first, we as a football program pride ourselves on the cornerstones of physical and mental toughness. The other night, we didn’t play that way. We’re all disappointed and the execution needs to be better on both sides of the ball. We never got into rhythm from an offensive standpoint, and the second half defensively was sloppy. We had 19 missed tackles and 15 missed assignments, and when that happens guys tend to deviate from what the plan is defensively a little bit. Say a defensive lineman is supposed to pinch inside, he’s instead going to loop because he feels he has to make a play. That shouldn’t happen. We as a staff are going to make sure it doesn’t happen again. Moreover, there were too many dead ball penalties. You can’t get into a rhythm with seven false starts– it kills drives. That’s a responsibility that we all take on. In the first half I thought we played well defensively, and then obviously in the second half, things started to roll against us a little bit. We started missing some tackles, not fitting some runs the way we wanted to; after the game watching film, we noticed that they didn’t really make any adjustments, we just failed to play Aztec football. Next, as for coaching changes, I want to say a couple of things. Number one, it’s something that is really hard to do midseason. I was fired from the Caroline Panthers midseason after we had 5 or 6 sacks against Tampa Bay. I know how that feels from both a personal and family standpoint and I know how difficult it can be. The one thing I can tell you is that Jeff Hecklinski handled this like a pro. He came to me on Thursday before the game wanting to have that discussion, and depending on how the game went, he knew that some sort of change had to be made. We’re very loyal to each other, our families are very loyal to each other, and we’ve been working together for 17 years. So I appreciate everything Jeff and his family have done for us. He’ll have a great career because he’s that kind of man and he’s that kind of coach. As we move forward, Jeff Horton is going to lead our offense. Jeff is a guy that I’ve had an unbelievable relationship with since I’ve been here. You see all those articles about how full our running back room is and how ready they are to play– that doesn’t just happen. Jeff is a guy that I have the utmost respect for and I love the way that he works with our players and the team. The other thing is bringing back Ryan Lindley, who I’m very excited to have back as someone who got to coach him in the past. Watching how his career has developed, working as a defensive analyst and all, I think he has really developed into a strong coach and am looking forward to what he can bring to this team from his different experiences. In conclusion, these last 72 hours have been challenging for everyone in the program. It’s definitely adversity, and this is where we’re going to find out the most about ourselves as a football team and do our best to keep working forward. The guys in the film room put something together about the team in 2015 that started out 1 and 3, and ended up winning 10 in a row and ultimately the championship. That really inspired the guys, and we’re looking forward to being back at Snapdragon for this week’s game against Hawai’i.”

**On the hiring of new Quarterbacks Coach Ryan Lindley:**

“I was looking for a guy who knew the details of being a quarterback, and someone who could teach those details to our players– Lindley is just that. It was an easy decision and one that just came to me. We talked a bit before his game with Texas A&M, and come Sunday he’s on a connecting flight from Mississippi to California. As a matter of fact, he got into the office on Sunday night, I came in at 5 in the morning on Monday, and I found him sleeping at his desk although we had a room set up for him. He hadn’t even seen his parents yet, but he was ready to work and so are we. We’re excited to get started.”

**On new Offensive Coordinator Jeff Horton:**

“There’s going to be some new things brought in and incorporated virtually right away. We’ve also got a bye week next week, and that’s maybe the only portion of good timing that we have in all of this. I think we have a firm grasp on what we want to do and we as coaches are going to do our best to get our players ready to play.”

**On quarterback depth for upcoming game against Hawai’i:**

“Braxton was practicing yesterday with no contact at all, and he still has to go through concussion protocols. Our doctors and trainers are all very on top of that, but I think that he’ll be good to go for Saturday. As you know, Kyle is having his surgery tomorrow, so we wish him the best of luck. We also have DJ Ralph, who’s a very good walk-on for us, so we have a good set of options. We’re going to see how the week plays out, but I believe we’ll have a full allotment for Saturday.”

**On the mentality of Ryan Lindley:**

“I tell all of our coaches, and I learned this a long time ago, your players aren’t your friends. It’s your job to coach and direct them to where you need them to go. Now, as more time passes, only then can relationships start to form, but right now, football is the number one priority and we need to do our best as a staff to get our team on a winning trajectory.”

**On Hawaii's lackluster rushing defense:**

“When I look at the film, I don’t think they’re bad at all. They have some really good football players on that team. They’re definitely a talented group especially when I look at the D-line so it’s going to be on us to perform the way that we know we can when it comes to running the football.”

**Senior Linebacker Caden McDonald**

**Thoughts on Hawaii:**

“They're a good team, just like any other team in Mountain West. Every team comes to play on Friday and Saturday nights. We got to get ready for them. We know they got a new coach up there and they always play good hard football so we're excited to play.

**On how defense looks at the change in the game last Friday and move forward:**

“It was definitely a player thing, we just got to play physically longer. I think that we just kind of hold it, we let let up like 300 Plus rushing yards and that is what we pride ourselves on defense, we just got to be mentally physically tough on the defensive side of the ball and not have many yards but definitely something we got to watch the film on was we already did and look forward to the next week and the next game and improve on that, look at the film and then make changes to it. We don't make any changes and what we're going to be doing so we just got to make the changes for this week coming up and work harder and be smarter this week.”

**Thoughts on Ryan Lindley’s career and what impact he could have:**

“He was here my sophomore year and he was a GA for us on the defensive side. He was even a scout team quarterback one week because we had so many injuries to the cleats on, dicing us up with the passes. But overall, it's a great thing to have Aztecs back in the Aztec building and we know that we have a culture around here that we stand for that he knows that culture. and it's nice to have coaches that understand that as well.”

**On having a break after this game:**

“The bye week is really good to recover and stuff like that, but we're worried about this week right now why we got to win this game where we're two and three right now we got to get more W’s in the win column. And the season is not over yet either, the team in 2015 was two and three at one point in their season as well and they went all the way to win the conference championships, so we are right where we need to be, the conference championship is still in reach for us.”

**On if what Coach Hoke put together inspired them:**

Caden: It was definitely a motivational thing because obviously winning is the standard around here and being two and three in a season. Some people could get discouraged and what not but seeing that and those guys are all the way to hold up the trophy at the end of the year. It's very encouraging and for all of us to know that like our goal is not it's not done it's not put out like we're still able to go reach the championship is good, it makes us all driven more to compete.”

**Senior Running Back Jordan Byrd**

**On how the second half of last week’s game is motivation and rewriting the rest of the conference:**

“Coming to practice and working hard, you know, there’s a lot of changes going on right now. But you know what we got to do as players you got to go out there and have fun and play hard, still going out there to fight for a championship. You know, still have a couple of games more. That's what we're doing out there. Just working hard on practicing, just trying to show up on Saturday.”

**On any surprise by changes this past weekend:**

“We all talked about it, it’s part of what happens in football you know things happen, you know, Jeff was a good guy. He really taught me a lot. Since the three years I've been with him, even coming into covid and we really didn't have that connection at first, because it was so hard to be around each other around that time. But once we had that connection, it was really good to have him as a coach.”

**On taking over on the offensive side:**

Jordyn: “He’s basically like my dad as well, been here five years with him. Feel really comfortable with him. Running backs too, everybody is comfortable with him around, he was our offensive coordinator once before, so I think we feel real comfortable with him having that job.”

**On what he might bring differently as an offensive coordinator:**

“Just toughness, that's what Coach Horton has been really putting on us, especially when you’re in a big group. That's what he coaches. The way he coaches us is to bring that to the offense and think that's really going to help us.”

**Thoughts on Ryan Lindley’s career and what impact he could have:**

“Having him on the team it was really, really going to be good for us. He was here my freshman year so it really gets out. Think he is going to be a really good fit for us. He brings a lot of energy to the offensive side so it will really pump it up.”

**On having a break after this game:**

“Coach Hoke knows what he’s doing with that bye week. We’re getting our bodies right. Having that week to prepare especially coming off the game of preparing for that. Just getting our bodies right, going over offense, especially what we're going through right now. It's really going to help us out for sure.”

**On if playing with different quarterbacks changes his responsibilities and job:**

 “We have a lot of young ones that go back there, you know, me and Chance do a good job at keeping them calm and confident out there, the linemen as well. They're very young, but as long as somebody tells them that you’re going to be okay, going out there having fun. Just keeping them calm. So, it's not really a big impact on who's going to be back there and we all have confidence in everybody touches that field for sure.”

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