



## **SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS**

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

**GOAZTECS.COM | @GOAZTECS | #GOAZTECS**

### **Head Football Coach Brady Hoke:**

#### **Opening Statement:**

“It’s great to be up here after a win, it sure makes it a little easier, a little more fun. But as far as the game and our team played, I thought our guys really played with great effort. I thought they played with physicality and mental toughness. I think coming off a tough loss against Fresno, I really liked how we answered the bell. I love how we practiced last week. It doesn’t always correlate with what kind of game you’re going to play, but I think it had something to do with it.

You know, offensively, we got to take advantage of some of the turnovers. We had some really good field position defensively and through the kicking game, did a good job getting the ball out. But we’ve got to finish drives better, and that’s a huge part of it. Part of that was on third downs, I think we’re 4-14, and we got to be better. Our consistency in the run game was disappointing. That’s something that you know, as you all know, when we run the ball well, we play pretty good football. The thing I was most impressed with, though, offensively was the last four minutes of the game. I think it was five minutes that they possessed the ball, got first downs, five first downs in a row and really did a great job. It was great to have your offense on the field at the end of the game. I really thought that guys did a great job when we needed to, I think, obviously, we all know we need to have a little better execution and we’re working on that, and we’ll do that.

Defensively, there are five big plays that we count as big plays that we gave up. I thought we played really well and in the first half and the second half we didn’t play as well. And I would say you always got to give the opponent a little credit but at the same time, you know we gave three big pass plays up and then two runs. We wanted to keep the run under 100 yards, we did not do that, they had 118. Then the positives, we had 10 TFLs or sacks. That was something that we always wanted to do. We’ll take 10 points, we only allowed 10 points, we’ll take that every day. The defense managed to get four turnovers and then really good in the red zone. Our red zone and third down defense has been pretty consistent, but the red zones have been really good. As far as the kicking game, it probably was one part that we really thought we didn’t play like we’re capable. We dropped a snap on a punt and Jack never does that, he doesn’t do that practice. We missed two field goals and had good coverage from the kickoff team. I think that team’s been a strong unit force. Jack dropped the one punt, but he also did a nice job of putting the football. He was a little off on some field goals, obviously. We got a lot of faith in him though.”

#### **On lack of offense at home:**

“Well, we want to execute better, that’s first and foremost every time. If we execute, I think we all go to whether it’s offensively, defensively or the kicking game. For that matter we all have to execute better and take advantage of what’s there, right in the end. Instead of field goals or kicking field goals, we probably would rather have touchdowns and we got to work ourselves into the end zone.”

**On giving up sacks:**

We got to take a lot of pride and I do think they are the best defensive lineman in our league. I think they do a nice job, when you watch them attacking at the line of scrimmage and coming off. They're very talented and we just got to do our job. We have to keep improving. I think the guys up front, we only had two penalties. I think that was something that we got better at, and we just got to keep getting better at."

**On Jesse Mathew's scoring 1st home TD:**

"Well, I think obviously his parents go to most if not all the games. For family and friends and all that to be here, his teammates. I think all that stuff is important, and for him to do it here in San Diego and for the first time in a Snapdragon, it's a big deal."

**On offense's patience:**

"I would start with Jesse and Tyrell. Both of those guys have played a lot of snaps throughout their career, whether it was here. They have practiced a lot of football; they have played a lot of football. Really their maturity, in handling a stretch where maybe they weren't getting the ball as much as they wanted to, and that's frustrating. But they went out and did the dirty work that they have to do, getting to the second level and blocking for the runs. They are patient enough, their quality and the character of both of those guys have been phenomenal. Shaw's kind of come on and has done a nice job. I think Mark Redmond has done a nice job and he's gotten better. There were times for him to catch a couple of those contested balls, I think he's improved."

**On Jalen & his relationships with receivers:**

"Yeah, I don't know if it was that, or just what they've done. It could be the timing and how we practice and how Ryan's done with him. I think that whole thing is coming together."

**On Coach Ryan and the passing offense:**

"Because of his experiences, I think guys tend to listen, and I think Ryan's been a big part of it. I think when you watch the interaction during practice, through the different drills, I think that's a big part of it."

**On what makes games against SJSU challenging:**

"They're a very physical football team and from the offensive line to what they do up front defensively and their linebackers. Both of us in the state of California, I think that's huge."

**On why more points were given up in the second half:**

"I would refer to last week. I think in red zone defense we're like second in the country. I would point to some of the big plays. You know, we've given up some big plays, which I have to go back and look at, but I don't think we've given up as many big plays as we have."

**On the overall improvement as a group:**

"Yeah, I think number one, in the Fresno game, the receivers that you play against are very talented. Fresno has always had good receivers, obviously with Hainer at quarterback. I think going into last week we have a lot of respect for the quarterback and the wide outs, and I think our guys really stepped up and did a nice job, a little tighter on coverage, a little bit more physical. "

**On Dallas Branch being defensive player of the week:**

“Dallas is a really quiet guy. He goes about his business and he's not really flashy, or showy or anything. He just does the job. “

**On the final drive of the game:**

“I think it was better execution. That was really the right side of the offensive line because most things went over Ross and Simmons and I thought Mark and J did a nice job blocking over there. I hope we can do that all the time.”

**On SJSU being a team that doesn't turn the ball over and putting them in a position to:**

“We're going to try and do our best to get the ball back and we do things at practice like the peanut punch, the interception drills, the different things that you try and emulate. “

**On how much emphasis there was to push the ball out:**

“None. None. I really think you know, my brother coached at the bears and his secondary coach was peanut and the other corner. But anyway, I think about that time because one thing Lovie Smith always did, any ball that was on the ground, they're going to pick up and it didn't matter, and that's something that I think a lot of people stole from him and I think a lot of the ways they coached turnovers and whether it's ripping the ball out, or punching it, all those things. I think that just came more into the game.”

**On how SJSU has dealt with the adversity of losing a player and having a game postponed but being able to win the past two times:**

“That's always really personal and really private. Brent, I've talked to him obviously, when the tragedy happened and since but it can bring you together as a football team, in some ways, and I don't like saying that, because it's a life. It's something that is a tragedy and fortunately, I have not had to go through that as a head coach.”

**Senior Cornerback Dallas Branch**

**On his performance Saturday:**

“It was big for us to get that win. I was just going in there, trying to make plays to help the offense out when they were struggling a little bit. Getting those turnovers in the end zone by men and by Dez [Malone] was big and helped us get this win.”

**On preparation:**

“It all starts in practice. Taking every snap like you're starting, so that when your number is called in the game, you're ready to go. Watching film and understanding what they want to do offensively. While the game is going on, watching the other corners, and seeing what they're seeing so you're ready to go out there and you know what's going on.”

**On Jaylen Mayden's relationship with the defense:**

“I definitely can't see myself being able to do something like that. Mayden's a great, hard worker, and I'm not surprised by the success he's having on offense. Having played defense, all of the defense really loves him and we have his back no matter what: success or struggle. We always have his back, and we'll always try to help pick him up and try to put them in the best position to be successful.”

**On the coverage during his interception:**

“For that coverage, I'm just reading the quarterback and going where his eyes take me. I saw the number one receiver go back on an out-route and I also saw the quarterback looking across

the field, so I decided to sink back and just made a great play on the ball. The pass rush helped get the ball out quicker than he wanted to, so I was able to capitalize on that and make the interception.”

**On how soon he knew he had an interception:**

“Right away. I just have that mindset of whenever the ball is in the air, it’s going to be mine— regardless of who’s thrown to our who’s back there.”

**On making several big plays against UNLV:**

“It was my second drive in, Coach [Kurt] Maddix called a great call. On the corner blitz, I tried to sell it like I wasn’t going in, timed the snap up perfectly, and it was just a great call for that play. On the fumble recovery, Cedarius [Barfield] made a great play punching the ball out and I just happened to be there to help scoop it up. We got the ball back for the offense and helped them go down the field and put some points on the board.”

**On everything coming together this year:**

“My first year here I didn’t play that much, but I was able to watch Darren Hall and Tayler Hawkins play and I was able to pick up on some of the things that they have done in the past that helped them to be successful. Coach Sumler has done a great job helping me out with my technique and really understanding the game. Taking those things, I’ve been able to build upon and add to myself and it’s really coming along. I’m very confident out there and I feel like I can guard anybody. I feel like I’m in a great situation to make plays because of the plays Coach Mattix calls and the defensive line getting pressure on the quarterback. Everybody on defense working together makes it so much fun and helps me be successful on this defense.”

**On SJSU’s offense:**

“They have some great transfers. They also have a great quarterback that came from Hawai’i that we saw a couple of years ago. He’s very dynamic— he can run, throw, everything. This week is about being disciplined, understanding our technique and assignment, and going out there and competing.”

**On Jaylen Mayden garnering extra respect for his time on both sides of the field:**

“I think it is. Being on the defensive side, we understand how he thinks, what makes him successful, and his mindset. Playing offense, they have that camaraderie together and they use that to rally around him as well to try and build success on the field.”

**Junior Tight End Mark Redman**

**On being surprised about his touchdown:**

“Not necessarily. We have had Coach Horton taking over in the past couple of games and he’s doing really well drawing up plays. You can see the offense is starting to take off more. He just called a really good play at a really good time and ended up with a touchdown. I was happy to put points up for the team.”

**On his thoughts during his touchdown play:**

“Just see the ball, catch the ball. Moose [Jalen Mayden] sold it perfectly— he was able to look the safety off, come back, and then it was an easy pass, catch, and throw. Then we got to go celebrate with the team and it’s nice to put up points for the offense.”

**On tight-end blocking:**

"It's awesome. We pride ourselves on physicality, especially up front. We try to set goals for each week, and we try to obtain those goals: whether it's passing, rushing, or whatever. We pride ourselves on physicality. Being there with the offensive linemen— myself and Jay Rudolph, then there's people out on the perimeter as well. You ask them to block, they light people up. It's awesome."

**On the last drive:**

"I think during the start of the game— myself included— we weren't really hammering the ball that well. Once we got down there, especially in weeks prior like at Fresno, we have to run the ball to run the clock out. It was really just a mindset, and everyone flipped the switch. We realized that we can't give the ball back to their offense, so we realized we had to keep on going and keep on driving."

**On Jalen Mayden's journey:**

"It was interesting. Braxton went down a few weeks ago, and he stepped in and did it with speed. Obviously, you guys know the story. He switched to defense, played there, and didn't throw a ball for who knows how long. Then he stepped in and he made plays. That's pretty unheard of for a lot of people, so it was really awesome."

**On Jalen Mayden's passing accuracy.**

"Yeah, definitely. It's always in your center of mass. He always gives you an opportunity to make a play on the ball, and everyone needs to cash in on those opportunities— and a lot of the time we have."

**On Jaylen Mayden garnering extra respect for his time on both sides of the field:**

"Personally, I'd say 100 percent. We were going in spring ball, fall camp, all those types of things. Jalen and I would go against each other a lot, so we tell funny stories back and forth about him playing certain coverage, me running against him, and sometimes he's making plays, and others I'm making plays. So at least for myself, definitely, I feel that way. I feel like the rest of the team as well because they respect him since he has played that role in the defense and also came back and how he's been able to do so well up to this point."

**On the difference between left-handed and right-handed quarterbacks:**

"I think you hear that a lot from people. I think when it gets into it and it comes down to game time, it's just another person back there throwing you the ball. Whether it's a lefty or righty, it doesn't matter who it is. It just comes out and you have to catch the ball."