



SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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

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

San Diego State Football Press Conference September 12, 2017

SDSU head coach Rocky Long

On what it would mean for the program to beat two Pac-12 teams in a row:

"I don't think it has anything to do with the Pac-12. Last time I looked, they [Stanford] are ranked 19th in the country so if you play well against the 19th ranked team in the country you ought to get some national exposure. I don't want to seem like I don't understand the situation but all it will mean if we beat them is we're 3-0, that's all it'll mean."

On if it will be helpful going against their own offense every day in practice to prepare for Stanford:

"I'm glad you brought that up. I think it's very interesting because we run very similar offenses, but in reality if we were playing them at the end of spring practice, it would have helped both of our teams on defense to get ready. But since in fall camp you prepare for the season and you prepare for other types of teams - because this is probably the only true pro style team that we'll play, now we'll play a couple triple option teams and we'll play a team or two that runs a little two back stuff but not very much - so in fall camp, we don't practice against it. We do a little scrimmaging against our own offense but we don't put a game plan in specifically for that offense. I would assume they're the same way. They don't play many teams that look like us anymore because there are so many spread teams out there. I assume during fall camp they worked on their defenses for those offenses just like we did. So for the two defenses, it's a normal week trying to put a game plan in for what they do on offense and only have three days of practice to do it."

On what contributes to his team's penalties and how to fix them going forward:

"Well, we're trying to fix it by coaching and we're trying to fix it in practice. I think a lot of it has to do with young players and I think last week we had six or seven penalties because our players were too excited about playing. We lined up off sides one time and we jumped off sides five times; that means that they're too excited [and] too ready to go. Now they gave an excuse but I watched it very closely on film and expanded the picture so I could tell. They said that the center from Arizona State was flinching when he was snapping the ball, now there is no evidence on film to say they were right, but part of coaching them when they come to the sidelines is coaching them hard when they jump off sides. A normal situation is you make an excuse, right? 'Coach will leave me alone if I make an excuse.' Three or four of them said that the center was flinching before he actually snapped the ball. Now, they might be telling the truth but there's no evidence on film to prove that."

On the offensive pass interference call that took away a touchdown:

"I think that was a questionable call, but there are a lot of questionable calls in every game. The offsides were not questionable. We were off sides."

On which Stanford is the "real" version following a win over Rice in the first week and loss to USC last week:

"I don't know. I tend to give the opponent in their last game the credit because when you watch them on film, USC looks like a

pro football team out there. Size, speed and strength and all that – they look like a pro football team. So when you compare Stanford to us, you can't take the USC game other than scheme. You look at the scheme to try and develop a game plan, but the USC game means nothing. I think that Stanford is truly one of the top 20 teams in the country."

On Rashaad Penny's maturity in his senior season and the stout play of the offensive line:

"I think the offensive line played much better in the second game than the first game, especially when you consider the competition, but they also have a really good running back behind them that makes them look good at times. I mean, Rashaad hits the hole fairly quickly and hits it going full speed and there are times when the offensive line allowed the defensive line penetration but the defensive line wasn't quick enough to change direction and make the tackle. It's a combination of a young offensive line that is continuing to get better but they've got a good running back behind them so they don't always have to be perfect."

On if he wishes he would've used Rashaad Penny more the last couple of years:

"No, I think he was used exactly in the proper way and that's why he can carry the ball 30 times a game this year."

On if getting outscored in the fourth quarter is an area of concern:

"It's always a concern when they have an opportunity to come back to win the game when you're ahead, that's always a concern. I don't think in the last game we played the deep ball very well where we were either called for interference or holding or they ended up catching the ball. Now, all those balls with the rules how they are now, you throw it deep, it's 50-50 whether you're going to get penalized or not on defense. If you play it the proper way and are able to knock the ball away, there is still a chance they are going to call interference. But I don't think we played the deep ball very well and that's the only way they got back in the game is throwing the deep ball."

On Christian Chapman's ability to pass against Stanford should they shut down the running game:

"I think that's what make the game so interesting. I think if both teams on defense are able to slow the running game down, you're going to find out how good the receivers and quarterback are. I think their quarterback is a good thrower. I think he's very accurate with the football. I think Christian is very accurate with the football so if we have to throw it we have confidence that we can throw it and catch it."

On how his young receivers have performed in the first couple of games:

"Well I think we haven't thrown it very much because we haven't had to and it's interesting to watch Stanford on film too. The two best teams I've seen on film the last two years where the receivers do a great job of blocking are us and Stanford because they are team guys and they realize their importance to the running game. Most people you see on film the receivers only block because they are told to and they don't really want to very badly. Well, the Stanford receivers will block you too because if the running game is going, they don't get thrown to a lot either. For our young receivers to get the ball thrown to them a lot means the running game is not going."

On what he fears most about the Stanford offense:

"I think that they are very good at the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball. That is our biggest concern about how we're going to match up on both sides of the ball. They are big and strong on the defensive line also. It's how we're going to match up at the line of scrimmage. Hopefully it's an equal match up there and it turns out to be up to the other guys to determine who wins and loses."

On what he sees from Stanford running back Bryce Love:

"That he wears number 20 and he looks a whole lot like Rashaad Penny carrying the ball. And they are almost the same size, I

think he's right at 200 pounds so Rashaad's a little bit bigger but they're about the exact same height and they wear the same number."

SDSU senior tight end David Wells

On how Rashaad Penny's early performance helps the team:

"It's big for us on offense. Rashaad is definitely a big moving piece for us, especially in our running attack. He's good, he's really good, so especially if we can get him going early in the game that's a good sign for us. It helps us — not like boost our morale because we believe in ourselves and we believe that we're a great team and we believe that we're a great offense and we can run it against anybody — so once we're able to get it going and start doing that, that's when the wheels start turning and we start going even more."

On this year's offensive line:

"For a young offensive line, I think they're doing a great job. They're coming off the ball hard and they're hitting dudes in the mouth and that's all we can ask of these guys. They're doing their assignments well and when I get up to the line they're eager and they're ready to go so compared to last year, it's really hard you can't even compare two great offensive lines against each other. They're completely different from each other. We had a lot of experience last year and this year we have young guys: Young guys that I don't want to say are more athletic because I'm not really sure at that point. But they come off the ball hard, they know their assignments and they work their hardest each play to get the job done and you know what, it showed last game."

On how it felt to be back out there last week and if there was an adjustment to game speed:

"I feel great. I thought I was ready Week One but you know, that's coach's decision and that's all it was, so I felt great out there. It was great to actually get some live snaps again and I'm perfectly ready to go and keep moving on forward. There wasn't really an adjustment. First drive, before the game, you start getting those pregame jitters again and you know you haven't had those in a while. For me, this is my senior year and I've done it before. It was really after that first drive was done and the second drive came, I was ready to go and hit them in the mouth out there. So I'm ready to go for some more."

SDSU junior defensive lineman Noble Hall

On winning the Mountain West Defensive Player of the Week Award and crediting his teammates:

"Yeah, that's always the answer. I feel like it was a good defensive effort. We executed and messed up on a couple parts but we were able to respond and the way we responded, we were able to come out on top. We held the rushing low, 44 yards, I believe. We could have done better containing [Arizona State quarterback] Manny Wilkins but we did the best we could and what we did was enough to come out on top."

On how Rashaad Penny's early performance helps the team:

"It gives us a lot of excitement; It gives us the momentum. We feel like if he can come out and bust a long run or a long kickoff return, the defense can come out and force a 3-and-out or force a turnover and get them right back on the field to do it again."

On if going up against the offense in practice helps prepare the defense:

"I feel like it does matter. We get a feel for what it's like to be pounded on, I guess you could say, down the throat by an offensive line and the running back's running on us. We're not going to be brand new to that feel when we get to the game because we've gotten that all through spring ball, all through camp, so I think we're going to respond to it very well."