



## SAN DIEGO STATE AZTECS MEDIA RELATIONS

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### **Postgame Football Quotes – Mountain West Championship Game**

**No. 19 San Diego State vs. Utah State**

**Dec. 4, 2021**

**Dignity Health Sports Park | Carson, Calif.**

#### **San Diego State Head Coach Brady Hoke**

##### **Opening statement:**

"I want to congratulate Coach Anderson and Utah State. They came in here and played a really good football game. I want to thank the Mountain West for dressing up Dignity Health Park a little bit. I appreciate that and the people from Dignity Health Park. We have been here two years now, and they have done a great job hosting us. I appreciate the fans who traveled from San Diego or were down here in Southern California. We were really happy to have them here.

Other than that, we did not accomplish the goals that we always set. We have goals of winning our 22nd championship, and we did not do that today. We are 11-2, and many football teams would like to be 11-2, but we would rather be 12-1, but that is where we are right now. We will get an opportunity to play in a bowl game, which is always an exciting thing and also a reward for our players. We can also set the school record for wins. We have an opportunity to still play for that."

##### **On the week of preparation and changes:**

"There are no excuses. We have to play with the hand we are dealt. When things are out of our control a little bit, we are not happy about it, but it's important when you look at the health and welfare. It impacted our tight end position, wide receivers, and a little bit of our offensive line. We made the adjustments we had to make.

Some of our guys played their first Aztec football, and it will be interesting to see how they played. On that last drive, we had true freshman tight end Gus McGee, offensive guard Ross Ulugalu-Maseuli, and left tackle Xavier Leonard. It will be fun to watch the film and see them and watch their growth.

Overall, we handled it very well. Practices were a little different because you don't have all the bodies out there, which sets you back a little bit. Again 11 personnel, 12 personnel, 13 jumbo have been big personnel groups for us, and not having them hurts. But that is the way football goes, and that is why we have to be better."

##### **On the leadership and resiliency of the team:**

"We have 32 seniors and super seniors, and I am really proud of those guys. They did a tremendous job. Our five captains with their messaging to the team and how they handled the team, was as good as I have been around. I am pleased with the resiliency of this football team. We have one more game, and we want to win that game."

### **San Diego State linebacker Caden McDonald**

#### **On how tough today's game was:**

"Utah State is a great football team that came out ready to play today. We didn't execute on defense, special teams, offense and all around as a whole team. We had penalties and we didn't click on third down to get off the field didn't get off the field. We just needed to play better as an entire team. There's no specific person or unit to blame. It's a team effort, it takes everyone to win, and it takes everyone to lose. But I'm proud of the guys, it's such a blessing to be able to play in the conference championship and to be able to do it with my brothers. I wouldn't trade it for anything else."

#### **On if Utah State did anything on offense that surprised you:**

"No, what we saw [in film] was exactly what they showed today. We just had some missed opportunities for turnovers. We could've had four or five turnovers today, but we couldn't capitalize on those opportunities and that definitely changed the game."

### **San Diego State wide receiver Jesse Matthews**

#### **On the team's performance:**

"Obviously we have to give props to Utah State for coming into the game and executing and doing what they had to do. We just made too many mistakes and missed so many opportunities and we can't allow that in a championship game."

#### **On the challenges Utah State brought:**

"We just didn't execute like we should. They were playing hard, of course, and they wanted to win that. They came ready. There wasn't anything they did differently that we didn't see throughout the week [at practice]. We just didn't execute."

### **Utah State Head Coach Blake Anderson**

#### **On Logan Bonner's performance:**

"Well, we needed him to play great today. He has gotten better and better as the season has progressed and that is probably just for him. He is not a guy that just goes in and picks it all up day one on the board, and you have seen him play his best ball the last few weeks with their defense being as dominant as it's been. The one weakness that we felt like we could potentially expose was, on the back end we felt like our quickness and speed could be a problem. That only matters if you're connecting the dots.

He had a great week of preparation, I thought he was in a good place coming into the game today. He got beat up a little bit today and he has not been physically 100 percent for quite a while, but he is one of the toughest we have ever been around. It is impossible to get him off the field. He is just going to get back up and keep playing. He let one get away today that he would like to have back, but other than that I thought he played flawless and really did a good job of taking what they gave us and spreading the ball around to everybody and I thought that was a big key in in trying to make them play the whole field and he did that really well today."

### **Utah State quarterback Logan Bonner**

#### **On his team's performance:**

"We planned on coming here and playing our best ball. We know when we play our best ball, be physical in every phase, and be explosive that we can compete with anybody in the country. I even told you this week we felt disrespected this whole year and we definitely felt disrespected coming into this week. So, we just put a play with a chip on our shoulder and got it done."

#### **On his performance:**

"Coming into this game, we knew that we were going to need to play our best ball. They are an unbelievable defense, we knew that coming in. They played well all year, they have unbelievable players, and we knew it was going to be a huge challenge. But we were up for it. We talked all week about how if we play our ball and dominate, we can play with anybody, and I think we showed that today."

**Utah State defensive lineman Byron Vaughns**

**On his team's defensive performance:**

"We knew coming in that this team loves to run the ball, so this week we emphasized how to run it practice and stop the quarterback from running because a dual threat quarterback is one of the most dangerous things in college football. Our coaches got us right with a game plan, they told us what to do, and what we needed to do to come out victorious and we did just that."

**On Coach Anderson:**

"My parents jokingly call Coach Anderson 'The God himself' because he brought me here, and I trusted him from day one. I knew he had good intentions and I'm proud to be a part of this. First year, nobody believed in us, and Coach Anderson told us every day, 'Only we believe in ourselves,' and Coach Anderson, when he says he is going to do something, just know that this man will walk on water. I am just proud to be part of it, proud to play for Coach Anderson."

**Utah State wide receiver Brandon Bowling**

**On the team's offensive performance:**

"We were able to get the run game going early, and once we got that going against a good defense like this, we are able to open them up and spread them out on the field. Credit to the offensive line, they protected Logan all day, so they did well."

**-SDSU-**