

# Pac-12 Conference Football Media Day

Friday, July 29, 2022  
Hollywood, California, USA

## Washington State Cougars Coach Jake Dickert Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're pleased to have Jake Dickert. He'll have an opening statement, then we'll open it up for Q&A.

Coach.

JAKE DICKERT: Good afternoon. I just want to start out by thanking all the media. I think you guys play a vital role in sharing the stories and experiences of all of our student-athletes. I think that's one thing that isn't brought up enough.

I'm excited to be part of my first Pac-12 Media Day. It means college football and the pageantry and traditions of college football is right around the corner.

I'm humbled and honored to be representing Washington State University, an amazing land-grant research institution. I'm honored to represent Washington State and our football program. It's a place that fits me and my family so very well. When I say represent Washington State football program, I have an opportunity to represent our coaches, their families, our administration, our strength coaches, nutritionists, equipment people, cooks and chefs, amazing faculty and alumni and our special fans.

Everyone really has a valued place in our program. I just really appreciate all those people.

I'm thankful for the belief in President Schulz; Chancellor Chilton; our athletic director, Pat Chun -- all amazing leaders in their industry -- and their belief in me and our program, what we can build in the future here at Washington State.

Our journey for 2022 really started January 9th. We started as a team really building what we're calling the new Wazzu. I know while I'm looked at as the model of consistency in the face of our program, I had an opportunity to bring 22 new staff members into our program, men and women that are amazing mentors for

our players, and they're all servant leaders to what our players need.

We began building a team, a team that's going to be forged through adversity and accountability, a team that's going to really believe in the process. Each and every one of our players are driven daily by wanting to be their best on and off the field.

I'm joined by two amazing representatives of our football program. We call them the Palouse products. The first one is Ron Stone Jr. He's an edge rusher from San Jose, California. R.J. was a First Team All-Conference performer last year in the Pac-12. Since day one, R.J. has been with me on the defensive side of the football, has been really a change agent in one of the best defensive turnarounds in the country last season.

I'm excited for that group's continued development under our new defensive coordinator Brian Ward.

The second one is Cameron Ward. Cam comes to us from West Columbia, Texas. He's a transfer. Quarterback from UIW. I want to be on the record and saying I'm a believer in Cam Ward. Cam has come in and earned the trust of this football team through repetitive action and hard work. He's put in the hard work behind the scenes. I'm excited about what he's going to do with the weapons that we have on offense under the direction of one of the best offensive coordinators I believe in the country in Eric Morris.

Our specialists aren't here with us, but we have two special ones in a First Teamer, Dean Janikowski, last year, as well as a Freshman All-American in Nick Haber. We continue to be excited about their development and using those guys as weapons.

But the bottom line in our program, character is an action word, okay? The two men that represent our place today, they fully embrace that and embody that, all right? They understand the impact they make on our team, but more importantly they understand the impact they make on their university and our community.

They really understand and embody what it is to be a

**ASAP** sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Coug.

Lastly, I think we stand on the doorstep of new challenges. But I'm really excited about the future of the Pac-12 and Pac-12 football. I think we have the right leadership in place with George, our commissioner, and his leadership team, because they're solution-based.

I believe everybody wants progress, but nobody wants change. I talk to our guys all the time, change is inevitable in life. College football is changing at a very, very fast rate. But I know because we have solution-based leaders in the Pac-12 and we have great leadership at Washington State, I think the Pac-12 is going to be here and is going to be thriving for a very long time.

We're excited about our '22 football season. I'm ready to open it up for any questions.

**Q. In regards to Cam, sets records in high school, what finally sold him on coming to Washington State?**

JAKE DICKERT: I think the biggest thing is consistency. I think Cam's story, if you don't know it, it is a special one. Comes out of a small town, running the wing T, just outside of Houston, Texas. Wasn't heavily recruited. Those are the stories that make college football what it is.

When I talk about Cam, Coach Morris was his head coach that season at UIW. But it was the opportunity to showcase what he could do in system a system that he believes in, in a system that is very quarterback-driven. We're going to give him the opportunity to change the play, get us in the best routes.

I told him all the time, I trust him, I believe in him, go out there and be you, right? Cam hasn't reached his ceiling. For us coaches that really love the passion and the technique and the coaching and the development, that's exciting for us as a football program.

I'm excited for Cam. I'm excited to help him through adversity. His first year at UIW, there was a lot of success. We know being in this league, there will be a lot of challenges that we're ready to attack head on.

It's amazing to see his development last year at UIW to what I saw in the spring. That's that classic year one to year two quarterback jump. I'm excited to help him throughout his journey.

**Q. Washington State have had success past five, six years. There was a time where they were beating down USC at home. What makes this time different for Washington State?**

JAKE DICKERT: Say that one more time. I didn't quite hear you.

**Q. Washington State has had success in the past. In terms of this time, what makes them different?**

JAKE DICKERT: Like I said, the new Wazzu hopefully is going to be about stability. Our players need stability, they need continuity.

I talked about a place that fits me and my family so well, it fits our players really well. There's a mentality and accountability because I think our guys will be the first ones to tell you that we're a team, okay? When we win 60-58, we win 0-3, the Cougs win.

There's a lot to having that team mentality that each and every one of our guys know they're playing for the man next to them. I can't speak to the other regimes on that, but I know that's what our guys will hang their hat on each and every week.

**Q. When you decided to hire Eric Morris, what kind of made you connect and realize that he was interested in potentially leaving in head coaching job to become an offensive coordinator?**

JAKE DICKERT: The biggest decision at first was we had to make a change. I think there was one of those things where just my vision of offense is multiplicity. You need a tight end to do that. I think in college football, you need to play with a pace.

I looked at it more from my defensive lens, what gives us problems. You create your lists of what that looks like. I know the air raid-ish offense has been very successful at Washington State.

But the seller to me was his energy and passion, okay? He understands Pullman. He was on Coach Leach's staff in 2012. It's important for me that him and his family are comfortable there and want to be there and see this thing all the way through.

I'm a firm believer he was one of the best young offensive minds in college football. I think we have him right here on the Palouse. We're very fortunate. I put him through a very extensive process on the front end. We're excited about what he does because it isn't just "This is what we do, Coach." He came in and saw our pieces. He's going to fit the strengths of our guys each and every week. I think that is a sign of a really good coach.

**Q. You mentioned approaching it as a defensive**



**coordinator. Some defensive coordinators almost want to pack it in on offense, don't want to be dynamic. Obviously you coached alongside Nick Rolovich, now bringing in a high-powered offensive mind. What is your experience with that? What made you want to drive towards a dynamic offense?**

JAKE DICKERT: If you look through my history, through the college bowl eras, the Wyomings, North Dakota States, it was downhill, power football. I still think you can create elements of power, toughness and physicality, which we will have at Washington State, but you have to take advantage of the new college rules, right? You have to be RPOing. You got to have the ability to play at any tempo. You have to have the ability to keep the defense off balance.

That will be a process as we go throughout our new journey. That's the vision I've always had of offensive football. That doesn't mean you can't be tough. The Cougar raid will be tough. I'm excited about bringing those run elements to our program, and the mentality that I think Eric and our staff has fits my vision of where we want to be in the future.

**Q. You obviously come from a small school background as a player and coach. With the way that college football seems to be moving with potential super conferences and haves and have nots, do you feel like it's moving a direction that's good for the game and for the players? What is your perspective of that coming from smaller schools?**

JAKE DICKERT: I think I have a little bit of a unique perspective. I have an opportunity to coach, to your point, at every level. I was a Division III football player, got an opportunity to make the climb.

I tell our guys, I used to sell raffle tickets to get into fall camp. I give them that perspective, too, just so we could eat (smiling).

College football is changing, right? There's a lot of parameters that we need to continue to keep in place, to preserve what we all love about the traditions and the rivalries of college football.

It's always going to be with a student-athlete center to it. I love it. I think it's going to be competitive. But don't make no mistake bit, the Pac-12 is going to be here for a long time in those power conferences playing big-time football.

I'm excited about that. Our athletes having opportunity, I know there's challenges out there, but at Washington State, our players, our people, we're going to adapt to it

and we're going to survive and we're going to keep advancing.

College football in the pureness of the game I think will always be there. I think we all have to fight to preserve that.

**Q. You mentioned rivalries, how special that is. Some of those rivalries nationally have gone away. How important is the Apple Cup to Washington State, keeping that as a foundation in the state?**

JAKE DICKERT: Well, I think when you walk through the door at Washington State, the first thing you hear about is the Apple Cup. But you don't fully understand it until you go through it. It was taken away from us in 2020. To have the opportunity to play that game, just walking to the stadium, you understand it.

Then obviously having the opportunity to bring the Apple Cup back into our building. The alumni, the faculty, everyone involved with Washington State, the calls, the texts, the emails, there's just such passion in it.

I know our people's food tastes better when we win that game. That's how much the Apple Cup means to us.

You know being in Washington, houses are divided. It's fun. You're either a Cougar or you're with that other team on the other side of the state. But those rivalries are what make college football so special, in my opinion.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.

JAKE DICKERT: All right. Go Cougs.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports