

Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Bernard Muir

Troy Taylor

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us. We'll start with opening remarks from Jaquish & Kenninger Director of Athletics Bernard Muir, who will then introduce our Bradford M. Freeman Director of Football, Troy Taylor, then open it up for questions.

BERNARD MUIR: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. I'd like to read from prepared remarks to make sure I don't forget anything.

Before I introduce our new coach I want to thank several people who have made this search and hiring possible. First and foremost I'd like to thank our campus leadership, specifically President Tessier-Lavigne and Provost Drell. They have been constant supporters of our athletics program and empowered us to act expeditiously and hire the right fit for Stanford.

I'd also like to thank members of our search committee, which included representation from our Stanford Board of Trustees, faculty, campus and athletics leadership, office of general counsel, as well as former football players.

Though I'll not go into specifics about the individuals who served on this committee, I can tell you their feedback and guidance throughout this process has been invaluable.

I'd like to thank deputy athletics director Tommy Gray, who serves as our sports administrator for our football program and was an integral part of this search process.

Finally I'd like to thank our tremendous football coaches and staff who have continued to work and recruit tirelessly through this transition. Their passion for this university was evident during this uncertain time these last couple weeks and I could not be more grateful for their efforts.

After we learned of Coach Shaw's resignation, we quickly embarked on a path to find our next head coach. We spoke with countless program stakeholders to gather feedback which shaped our ideal candidate profile. The

process served as a refreshing reminder of the power of the Stanford football network.

I'd like to express my gratitude to the football coaches, the executives, the general managers, current and former student-athletes, football student-athletes, and so many others who lended their assistance and feedback throughout this entire process.

While I will not divulge the specifics of our candidate pool, I will share that our committee was very pleased with the volume and quality of interested candidates that this opening attracted.

As we set out about the work of evaluating candidates, Troy's credentials stood out among the group. The turnaround he lead at Sacramento State is truly remarkable. His .789 winning percentage as a collegiate head coach certainly jumps off the page.

When members of our committee began speaking with the connections in the football world, the fervor and enthusiasm with which they spoke about Troy was very intriguing. However, it wasn't until we had the chance to visit with Troy and feel his genuine passion for the game of football and his deep care and commitment to the student-athletes entrusted into his leadership we realized we found Stanford football's next leader.

As Troy shared his coaching and player development philosophy with us, our committee quickly understood that he has the chance to accomplish special things here on The Farm. Stanford is a place where individuals can come to pursue their fullest potential, and that doesn't stop with just our students.

Our athletics department has a deep tradition of developing coaches without power conference head coaching experience from Bill Walsh to Jim Harbaugh and many other sports here at Stanford, this is a place where coaches with the right tools and mindset can develop into incredible leaders.

I couldn't be more excited for our student-athletes to get to know Troy, to experience his leadership not only on the



football field but throughout their lives.

It is my pleasure to introduce the 35th head coach in Stanford football history, Troy Taylor.

Troy, I'm going to give you a jersey here. Congratulations.

TROY TAYLOR: Thank you. Appreciate it. Thank you for being here.

I want to say a few thank yous. President Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Provost Drell and Bernard Muir for believing in me and handing this program over for me to lead and believe that I'm the right guy for the job.

The search committee was incredible. Really appreciate what they've done. I also want to thank David Shaw for what he's done for this university and the football program. The players he's brought in are first class. I've had an opportunity to speak with a lot of them. They did an unbelievable job recruiting the very best in all fields.

Then my wife Tracey and my family for the constant support and belief that this was important and something that we could do. We've moved around a little bit, and we found our final destination, which is really exciting.

I'd like to thank Sacramento State for the opportunity that I had there, to lead me to this place.

Usually the first question is: Why Stanford? To me, it's very clear. There's no other place that I'd rather be than right here. Stanford offers the opportunity to bring in the brightest, the best, to win on and off the field. When you say the name 'Stanford', people don't ask which Stanford or what Stanford, they know what you're talking about all over the world. It attracts the very best.

Student-athletes that come here know they're going to be challenged both academically and on the field. When you draw that kind of player, that type of person, clientele, I don't know how you can't be successful. I'm very excited about that.

Had an opportunity to speak with our student-athletes in a team meeting. I am speaking with them individually, every one of them. They're remarkable. You know that the Stanford student-athlete is going to be remarkable when you sit down and you speak with them, and you really get to know them, you see the light in their eyes, what they're all about. You realize why this place is special.

It's special because of the people. The degree is powerful, all those things that come with the Stanford degree, the notoriety and respect, but it's really the people that make

this place special. It draws the brightest and the best. To be able to circulate and communicate and lead and learn from all these people is something that is absolutely a dream come true.

How are we going to build this program? It's really simple: it's built with love. We lead with love. Fervent belief and passionate belief in what we're doing. A love of Stanford, a love of each other, of our coaches, a love of competition, a love of football. These student-athletes here, they love football as much as they love going to school. They want to excel and be great at all of those things.

Our job is to lead with love. Love is the most powerful force in the world. There's fear, that's pretty powerful, and there's love that is more powerful. You can change the world with love. That human connection, that belief in somebody, belief in a group of people.

Some people will tell you that fear is more powerful than love. We probably all have been scared in this room. It will make you do some incredible things. But love is more powerful. If you want to argue about that, I would. I would say most of you, if you have children, would run into a burning building to save your child. So love can change the world, it can change people, and it can change our football program.

We are looking for student-athletes that absolutely love football and love Stanford and are going to love each other. If that leads us, I don't think we'll ever go wrong.

We want everybody in our program to come back, every student-athlete that is on our football team we are inviting them back. You have a place here whether you've played one snap, whether you've been a starter, whether you're a nationally recognized player, or if you're injured. We want every player back on because they're extraordinary and that's why they're here.

I've already offered an invitation to every single player on our team to stay and be a part of what we're going to build. Stanford has been great in areas all over, including football. We can do it again.

Some people don't think that Stanford is set for the new college football environment and climate. I would disagree. I think we're perfectly positioned. Do we need to make some adaptations, be agile and adjustment? Absolutely. That's what good people do.

We have the brightest people here at Stanford. We will make the adjustments, but we will not lose our dignity and integrity, and what is most important to us is our student-athletes' experience, graduating, and having an

unbelievably remarkably great experience.

We will be champions here. I don't know when it will happen, but we will be champions. I'm really excited to get started.

Any questions?

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Troy, when it came to finding a head coaching job at this level, I know you've talked about how much Sacramento is home to you, to find a place that is as close to Sacramento as Stanford is on behalf of your family, how much did that factor into the decision of all the jobs that were out there and made available, this was the one?

TROY TAYLOR: Absolutely. For me it was very clear: this was the place that I wanted to be. I've known about Stanford and the type of people that it attracts, the people that have been through here, what they stand for. It was a perfect fit for me.

To me, I love winning. I do. But it's got to be done in the right way and it's got to be able to draw the right people and have sustained success in all areas. I don't think there's anyplace in the country that offers what Stanford can offer.

After meeting the search committee and getting to talk to Mr. Muir, I knew that this was the right place. In fact, I knew if I took the job, I needed to finish what I had started at Sacramento State, and he didn't hesitate. That's when I knew that this was the right man to work for and this place has integrity. They don't just talk about integrity, they live it.

I couldn't be more thrilled. This is my final destination, the final chapter in my coaching life. Hopefully it will be for a very long time. We're going to have a lot of fun.

Q. I know there's been a lot of talk about NIL, stuff like that. You mentioned it. How do you plan on navigating that? You also said you're welcoming the whole team back. What is the process like getting started, transfer portal potentially, getting guys to stay committed?

TROY TAYLOR: College football has changed more in the last three years than it probably has in 40 or 50 years. Navigating through that is something you need to take your time. We got really smart people. We'll adjust to all of that.

I can say this. There is nothing more important to us than

taking care of our student-athletes here. Their experience, how they do in the classroom, the support they get, that they can be champions on the field. We'll do what's right by them and still do it in a way that holds up the integrity and dignity of Stanford University.

Q. When you left Folsom, was becoming a Power Five coach something that was a goal of yours? How has the journey been?

TROY TAYLOR: It's definitely been the road less traveled. If you look at kind of where I've been, it's pretty clear it had nothing to do with money or contracts. That's pretty clear. I've never chased that. For me, it's been following my bliss. I love working with student-athletes. I love coaching football. I love competing.

For me it's always been about being at the right place, feeling you can do it the right way. I was at Folsom for quite a while. We had a lot of success with some unbelievable people there. Then when I was offered the job by Beau Baldwin, the head coach at Eastern Washington, it was a great opportunity. We took the family up. I wouldn't be here without Beau.

There's not many people that would hire a high school football coach to come up and run an offense of one of the best FCS teams in the country. Beau is a special guy. He's the one that gave me the opportunity. It was an unbelievable experience. It took me through Utah, Coach Whit giving me that opportunity. I learned a lot there. Then Mark Orr in Sacramento State. Incredible coaching staff I had there.

It's the road less traveled, but it has made all the difference. I'm at an unbelievable place that I feel at home. I can't wait to get started. I've already gotten started, but I can't wait to move forward.

Q. How do you describe your offense to people who didn't watch the 66-63 game? How do you plan to install it with these players who were recruited for a different system?

TROY TAYLOR: I would say to describe it, we're dynamic. Offensive football is about finding space, creating space, different ways of doing it. We want to create as much anxiety for our opponent's defense as possible. That's doing a lot of different things.

Won't get into the schematics too much. But dynamic, aggressive. Again, we're not fear-based. We're going to attack. We're not worried about making mistakes. We are going out and striving, we are driven for the desire to be successful, and our enjoyment.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Now, it's very flexible as well. We've had quarterbacks in the system that were dual-threat quarterbacks. We had quarterbacks that were pure drop-back guys. There's great players everywhere. There's great players that have the acumen to come to Stanford and be successful both in the classroom and on the field.

We'll be flexible with the athletes we have. As a high school coach, you have to adjust to what you have. I think we've been adept at doing that, at being able to utilize different people's skills. Getting our hands on those guys, seeing what they do well, highlight what they do well. The system is flexible enough to utilize all the different skills.

Q. You said you got started already. Talk to us about Saturday's visit with the players. Also, how fortunate do you feel that you know the Nor Cal talent?

TROY TAYLOR: I think you can always tell what's important to a person for what their priorities are, how they spend their time doing it.

The first order of business the last two days have all been about our players here at Stanford. Able to have a team meeting, see their faces. With the new way we work, some are on Zoom because they're out of town. But it was great reaching them, telling them my vision, extending that invitation, trying to calm the waters. When you don't have a head coach after having so much stability for a long time, that can create a lot of anxiety.

I think the first thing I told them was extending an invitation to them to be a part of our football program, that I want them back. Then everything went from there.

After that, I've spent most of the last two days meeting with every single player, learning about them, what their dreams and aspirations are, what they're looking for, how can I help them be successful.

The goal is really simple: we want them to graduate with this degree. That's the number one goal. There is no close number two goal. The second goal is for them to have an unbelievable experience here. That means their time, their interacting with their fellow teammates, student-athletes on campus, the alumni, all those things are extraordinary here at Stanford and they need to take advantage of those things. Part of that experience is winning. We want to win, we love to win. They've attempted to win at everything their entire lives. That's really the goal.

Then to maximize their potential. It's really simple. How do you do that? Well, there's a lot of different ways to do it.

The main point of departure is them knowing that you care about them, that you love them, and then giving them the tools that they need. Their belief in you that you can lead them to get them better.

If you have those things, some competency, a little creativity. I live in the realm of possibility. I think anything's possible. I go into every situation thinking it's going to work. If it's not working, we adapt and adjust.

We got great people here, the brightest minds in the world, students, faculty, administration, all those things. There's no reason why we can't have incredible success here on a sustained basis.

Q. I'm sure you've already heard some cracks about the Cal connections. How do you feel like your experience at Cal, with this rivalry, kind of helps prepare you?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, Cal has forged the person I am. It's been a big part of it. You come in as an 18-year-old teenager, leave when you're 21, 22. Those experiences really help create who you are and how you see the world. Forever grateful to Cal. It was an unbelievable experience.

I do think it has helped me prepare for this moment. The student-athletes at Cal and Stanford, institutions that really strive to be great academically, emphasize that. It attracts a different type of student-athlete.

I rubbed shoulders with those guys every day as a student-athlete at Cal. Excited to be here. Excited to continue. It's a great rivalry, one of the oldest rivalries. Excited to compete against Cal.

Q. I want your thoughts on how you feel your time as an offensive coordinator at Utah has prepared you for this position.

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, I spent some time as assistant coach at Cal. Obviously it was Pac-12 now. The time at Utah was invaluable. To be able to learn how they do things, Coach Whit has done it for a long time, they've been very successful. Different ways to do it, different philosophies.

Then being an offensive coordinator, what people do defensively, the challenges that go into that. I think it's really important.

That being said, I think football is football. You're still working with young men that have the same aspirations and desires and wants, questioning themselves, all those things in terms of their ability. Everybody has those

challenges.

I think all my experiences have been really important. Frankly, at the high school level, it's kind of where I became a coach because I really learned to coach at different levels, how to get the most out of student-athletes, believe in them, how to build a culture, those are things that are really important.

I think this game is all about culture, which is relationships, building a belief in yourself and in your teammates and the system, then going out with a great level of confidence.

All my stops have been very vital in my development.

Q. After Friday night's game, take some time, sleep before the whirlwind of Saturday began, in that period between that game against UIW ending, you kind of beginning this chapter here, what reflections did you have about your time in Sacramento, with that class of seniors?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, obviously emotional to leave a place that I really love. It's a special place to me. To come here and have a new challenge, be a place that I really have an unbelievable amount of respect for, there's obviously emotional turmoil.

Then you add the fact that every season you lose seniors. That senior class is unbelievable. They lost one Big Sky game in their career when we were there. They were phenomenal. They really changed the climate of that place and that university and that city in some ways.

I'm going to miss those guys. I'll maintain the relationships. They all have my phone number. Anything I can do to help my student-athletes and Sacramento State moving forward, until we play them in game two, I'm there to help with the transition.

Q. You mentioned more has changed in college football in the last four or five years than the last 50. How have the last couple of years maybe affected or forced you to adapt your coaching style? What kind of coaching style do you have with your staff, CEO type, hands on...

TROY TAYLOR: That's a great question. It's a layered question.

Here is the great thing. Yes, it has changed quite a bit. We all know the areas that it's changed at, the ability and flexibility for student-athletes to leave and try another place for whatever reason. Now more than ever it's about relationships and creating a culture that people want to be

a part of.

I still think people are drawn more to incredible environments that they feel valued, respected and challenged than maybe some other shiny objects. I think it will draw the right people here to Stanford. I think they've done that for a really long time.

Now, do you have to adapt and adjust? Yes, you have to. We will adapt and adjust. But the culture part, I think it becomes even more important that somebody can come here and feel like a family.

Think about when you go home. You like going home because people accept you for who you are, right? We're all different. This has got to be a place that they feel they're at home, they're valued and accepted for who they are, because we're all different and unique.

If you create that kind of environment, you're authentically those things that I talk about, I think you will draw people that have those similar beliefs.

I think you just be louder with who you are in terms of your values and your culture, and you will attract and keep people staying. At the end of the day we want all of our student-athletes to come here, get their degree, stay and complete their athletic career here.

I am hands on. I will run the offense, call the plays. Obviously as a head coach, I'm pretty good at multi-tasking. I have to obviously lead as the head coach, be involved in every aspect. I'm a person that's involved in everything.

We'll hire a great defensive coordinator, let him do his thing. Good people don't like to be micromanaged. We'll get an extraordinary defensive coordinator, support him. We're going to play with a fervor, excitement and love that's never been seen before. That will attract players to come play for us and make them want to stay.

Q. As you look to build the staff, what attributes are you looking at? How do you think about the value of maybe maintaining some continuity for what has been a stable and successful era?

TROY TAYLOR: That's a great question. There's really good coaches, the staff here. Interviewed them all, spoke with them all. Very good people. Very good coaches.

That being said, it's about the right fit, putting right dynamics before. One of my mentors is Chris Petersen. He talks a lot about staff, what he's looking for. I really connected with the fact that high integrity, high output, low

ego, those are the things we're really looking for.

The ante to become a coach here, you have to have high integrity, be a hard worker, low ego, and you got to be competent in what you're doing and care about the kids. The rest of the stuff is pretty negotiable in terms of scheme and all those things.

We want guys that are on a continual quest to get better, do not think they've arrived, to be humble and hungry, always learning. I'm not a finished product. I can become a better coach. I've got to become a better coach. That's part of what humility is. Humility is believing you can do better and give more. That's going to be our staff. We're going to really be a moniker of getting better, improving, being creative, giving our guys a chance to be successful both in the classroom and on the field.

Q. Can you talk about the moment that you did find out, where you were, what that was like? What did you do to celebrate?

TROY TAYLOR: It's a good question.

It was an exciting moment. I was in my office. I think I did a fist pump, tried to act like I was calm and cool (smiling).

Those moments are great. It's a special time. I mean, the reality of being able to come to Stanford University and lead the football program is daunting, humbling, all those things that people talk about.

But it stirs me. It excites me. I really feel I'm at home. We have everything we need here. Talk is cheap. We got to get to work. Really excited to get to work.

Q. How do you view Stanford's place or role in the Pac-12, if you will, with all the looming changes in the conference?

TROY TAYLOR: The great thing is that Stanford is going to remain Stanford. Obviously the affiliation with the Pac-12 conference has been for a long time. I trust our leadership, where we're headed, wherever that is. But we are always going to be Stanford, which is an unbelievable experience for our student-athletes, putting them first. Really emphasizing their experience in the classroom and being champions on the field.

Stanford has been the most successful sports department I think in the country in terms of winning and producing really high-caliber student-athletes and still winning championships. Stanford is not going to change.

College football will change. Sports will change. Who

Stanford is, what they stand for, what we stand for, how we go about doing those things, we'll make adaptations and adjust, but that's the great thing about a place like this, is it's stood the test of time because its foundation is so strong.

Q. Having your ties with Folsom and the quarterback, how familiar are you with him?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, Ari Patu. I got to see him play a lot in high school. Never really spent too much time evaluating him because I knew he was kind of out of our grasp as a special kid. So I'm excited to work with all of our quarterbacks. There's some really special people here.

We will be all about competition. I'm very competitive. It's one of my foundational personality parts is I love to compete and win. Everybody will get a fair opportunity to come in here and compete.

We're going to need more than just the starters. We're going to need backup players. We're going to need scout team players. We're going to need everybody to accomplish what they want.

Stanford football is not a silo. We want to involve everybody, our faculty, our alumni, our past players that have played here. We have an unbelievable heritage. We want everybody to be a part of that.

For us, it's about extending our reach, reaching out, building relationships, because that is a strength of ours, is our past. But I think our future is just as bright.

Q. Based on your conversations with the interview process, what is your understanding of how you'll be able to use the transfer portal? Do you plan to be active in it during this cycle?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, I mean, we're competitive. We want to have every competitive advantage we can and bring in great players.

That being said, they got to fit with what we're looking for in student-athletes. That will not be compromised. The great news is there's plenty of great student-athletes out there that are great football players, highly motivated.

I think we're open to the transfer portal but we're going to make sure it's the right fit and the players fit in here and continue to keep the integrity of the institution in a strong place.

Q. As far as assistants go, you've got Chris, Andy and Bobby all down in the mix for your old job. There's

discussion they kind of want to stay together. Have you given any thought or consideration to whether or not there's going to be people that come with you from Sacramento?

TROY TAYLOR: Those three that you mentioned are extraordinary coaches. Sacramento State leadership with Mark Orr and President Nelsen, those three individuals, hopefully one of them will be the new head coach, will be extraordinary. Considering everybody there...

Again, we're trying to give our players, our student-athletes, the very best. There's some really good coaches there.

That being said, I'm looking everywhere to find the best coaches that fit with the profile of the things that I mentioned. I'll spend a lot of time on that, take it very seriously.

There's nothing more important than assistant coaches who are going to be interacting on a daily basis with our players. In a lot of ways they're a big, huge part of their experience. We want guys that are positive and demanding, detailed, very creative, are able to push our players to their very best but do it in a way that builds up their confidence.

If they fit in, I'm willing to look anywhere to get the best people here that fit with Stanford because it is a unique place.

The amount of people that we reach out to for student-athletes isn't going to be as wide and varied as a lot of places. But the draw is incredible for Stanford. You can walk into any high school, any home, they're going to be drawn to the Stanford identity and experience I think.

I'm a big believer that like attracts like. Whatever you are, extend out there, it will draw that type of student-athlete in. That excites me. I think that's honestly a strength of Stanford, is it attracts those types of student-athletes.

Q. On reactions from other coaches at Stanford, how has that been so far? Stanford has a close-knit athletic community.

TROY TAYLOR: Unbelievable. Getting a text message from Tara is pretty surreal. Admired her for a really long time. Not just the winning, but how she goes good doing things. It's incredible. I've already requested to pick her brain. She's open to that, I think (smiling).

There's so many extraordinary people here at Stanford. Condoleezza Rice is a person that reached out. That's

surreal for me. The many student-athletes that have been here, incredible faculty.

I wouldn't be a sharp person if I didn't try to learn from all the wonderful people that love student-athletes, know how to lead, be successful. I'm going to wear those people out talking and picking their brains. I'm really excited.

We have a resource here on this campus that is unbelievable, the brightest and best in the world. I want to utilize all those resources and learn as much as I possibly can because, again, Stanford is a unique place.

Q. Clock ticking for recruiting. What is on your to-do list for the next 10 days or so?

TROY TAYLOR: We have a commitment to all the student-athletes that committed to Stanford. We're holding that commitment. We're standing by that.

When they committed to Stanford to be a student-athlete, it's all verbal, but when they committed they jumped in the boat, became a Stanford Cardinal. We're really excited.

Reaching out, I'm going to get on the road, see them, see their faces, look in their eyes. The great thing about Stanford is those players that committed, I wasn't the head coach when they committed, and they still want to be a part of this program. That shows you how powerful Stanford is, also how sharp the student-athletes are who make that decision.

Now, there's change that has occurred, occurs in college football. My job is to make sure they know who I am and what I stand for, that they're still welcome into our program, then just continue to recruit them and remind them of why they originally chose Stanford.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, everyone.

TROY TAYLOR: Thank you.

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