

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Kyle Smith

Donavin Young

Aidan Cammann

Men's Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We have Stanford, and the Cardinal head coach Kyle Smith will offer an opening statement. Coach, the podium is yours.

KYLE SMITH: Thank you, just really thankful to be here. We're really looking forward to another season here in the ACC.

We've been really fortunate. I think the past two years the ACC has really elevated our profile. I think Stanford is a global brand, and that association with the Atlantic Coast Conference has been very valuable.

With the season we lost -- as most of you know, we lost a really significant contributor, Ebuka Okorie was the first round draft pick, but I feel really good about this group.

Our motto this year is "good to great." We feel like our first year was relevant -- get relevant. We did that. Last year we replicated it, and we were close to being an NCAA Tournament team. That was good, and now if we can replicate good, the next step is to go good to great.

A testament to that first group of guys and these guys behind me that have been here the whole time, is that we're one of only five programs that has been .500 or better in the ACC last year. That's Clemson, Louisville, Duke, and North Carolina. So to be associated with those teams is I think great progress for Stanford basketball, and hopefully we can do our best to do that again.

We are led by a group of juniors and one senior I think that have been in the program that are kind of behind that, and some of them are not as name recognizable, but they are the freshmen we signed our first year.

I think Stanford's program -- if we are going to get to where



we need to be, it is going to be with Stanford guys, obviously, and high school recruits. We also were able to bring in some good transfers that fit our profile that we're really excited about, and also one of the more heralded ed freshmen classes at Stanford in a while.

A lot of things to look forward to. We're really excited about the season.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. When you look at the scoring from last season, obviously like you had made mention of, going away, having Donavin and Aidan be here and representing the team, but then also representing what the scoring can be. Just what can you say about uplifting them this season and what that means.

KYLE SMITH: I stood here 12 months ago and we lost our top four scorers I think; maybe five. I didn't know where it was coming from.

And somehow we were sitting on the leading scorer in the league, so I hope something like that is going to happen again.

But we're really an unselfish group. They really make the extra pass. It should be our best group that way. I think with our perimeter, these guys are really great two-way players, and we think always asking from both of them to be more aggressive. Hint, hint. And getting Aidan to always say more. He averaged I think, what, 11-5 the last ten games this season, so we're looking to make up for it.

Donavin has battled injuries all this time, and he's a big contributor in some big games on the road at North Carolina in a win and at Virginia Tech, and hopefully we're going to get more of that out of him.

Like I said, Christian Bliss and Julius Price and Anthony Batson, and I think our guards and Slim Rogers. I think we have some guys that are going to make some good production there.

Q. Talk about a couple of your freshmen coming in



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and what you expect to see from this season? Aziz Olajuwon as well as Isaiah Rogers.

KYLE SMITH: The one that's been the most ready is probably Julius Price, and he's kind of a combo guard, a two-way player. Just a really good, strong, athletic. Played on the Swedish National Team, and really his emotional maturity is just really level.

Slim, Isaiah Rogers, is a really electric scorer. Can get him in bunches and just an awesome attitude, and seems to be getting better every day.

And Aziz gives us something different. He's a big wing that I think he'll have an impact on us two areas. He's kind of a three and D guy. Just good perimeter defender and goes after the ball, as you might expect. Both sides rebounding, which I don't think that's necessarily a strength of ours, but having a guy like that, I think Donavin actually said it yesterday. He is like, it's nice to have him competing for balls out there, and that will -- I think as the season goes on, I don't like to put too much pressure or expectation on any of them because academically and socially there's an adjustment at any school, and especially Stanford, but that's what we've seen.

And we got a couple of others that are pretty good too. Elias and Drew.

Q. Kind of following up on that, you had Okorie last year. One, how much does that give you confidence in having these freshmen come in and be major players for you? Then also, what's kind of the push and pull with letting freshmen become freshmen, make those mistakes, and also having to balance, you know, where you are trying to win games along with your growth?

PAT KELSEY: We have a really good way of measuring things. Think of our nerd ball/hustle stats. Guys really earn their way. That keeps -- you've got to be humble about it because there's so much feedback. It's a way you get on the court.

Like I said, Julius has been the best freshman to do that, and I don't feel Ebuka's success has really -- we've garnered a lot more attention in recruiting.

It wasn't so much -- this year's class is more off the fruits of the labor of our first group with Maxime, and we won 20 games, and I think the ACC really helped us. It really kind of elevated Stanford in a different light. Now we're seeing it more in our ability to track other guys that, like I said, I told someone earlier, I said the agents really like us now for Ebuka.

Can you do that with my guy? I'm, like, oh, we'll give it a shot, but you have to earn it. I hope that answered it.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you. Questions for Aidan.

Q. Aidan, having some guys go through injury last year, like Skrinda, as well as Stinson, having them back, just what does that mean to Stanford for this roster this year?

AIDAN CAMMANN: Yeah, it's great having our full team back. I think especially Evan. He's been here for the past, I don't know, since Smith has been here, and he's always a great guy to have in the locker room and around the team.

But having him back on the court is something we've been missing. I think he can really help us this year moving forward. He has some of that veteran experience even if he hasn't played in too many games. He will be a great piece for us this year.

THE MODERATOR: Your family has a pretty solid set of roots on the East Coast. Your dad played basketball at Yale. Your mother is the head swim coach at Merrimack. Your sister swam at Georgetown. What made you want to go west?

AIDAN CAMMANN: My brother also swam at Redlands, so I'll throw that out there. My mom is from Culver City, so I have been going out to L.A. every summer. Stanford has kind of always been the dream.

When I got the chance to come out to Stanford, it was a no-brainer.

THE MODERATOR: You've appeared on the All-ACC academic team twice as well as the ACC honor roll. What's the trick in integrating the round ball with the textbook?

AIDAN CAMMANN: I don't know. It's a boring answer, but I think it's just kind of managing your time well, being able to get your homework done, get your academics done before the deadlines and kind of seeing when you have things coming up, because basketball is kind of a non-negotiable. We have travel. We have games. You've got to be able to schedule around that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Donavin.

Q. Having a guy like Christian Bliss come from Delaware, what does he bring to this team and just what you can say about maybe some leadership and some play that you've seen from him as you get set for



the year.

DONAVIN YOUNG: Definitely. He brings exactly what you are saying. Leadership, just a veteran out there. Just knows how to play the game right.

He's a great passer, so that helps players like me and Aidan who, as Coach says, aren't too, too aggressive. Catch and shoot, ready. Yeah, very vocal for everything.

Q. You averaged around 15 minutes per game last season, and now you're here representing your team at the ACC Tip Off. What has changed between this time last year compared to now?

DONAVIN YOUNG: I would say what's changed is being available. Just making myself available for every practice, every lift the whole summer and the autumn so far.

I think just making myself available to the coaches, to my team, and being able to put in extra work that I wasn't able to previously put in is the biggest change.

THE MODERATOR: You obviously have presence on the outside and the inside. What's more satisfying for you? A three-pointer from the corner or a two-hand contested dunk?

DONAVIN YOUNG: Two-hand contested dunk, for sure. I think I'll get a lot of opportunities to catch and shoot three, especially playing with point guards like Juice and Christian. But yeah, definitely a dunk.

Q. What would you say is your message to the fans this year for Stanford basketball?

DONAVIN YOUNG: Just be ready. New year, new team. Just bring the energy to Maples.

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