

Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Troy Taylor

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Taylor.

Q. How excited are you and Stanford to be joining the ACC?

TROY TAYLOR: We're thrilled to be here. Thank you. Unbelievable conference. Some great traditions, great coaches, great area of the country. We're excited about it.

It's also good for us in terms of recruiting. A lot of our roster comes from this side of the country. An opportunity to come out and play here three times a year on this coast. I think it's going to continue to help us in recruiting.

Q. Coming with you guys into the ACC is also the California Bears. That rivalry between you two goes back decades. How is it to maintain that rivalry going into a new conference?

TROY TAYLOR: I think it's really important. One of the things that makes college football great are the rivalries that have went on for a long time. I think it's important with realignment, all these things that happen, the rivalries are something that's really important.

We got a great relationship and rivalry against Cal, right there in the Bay Area. We're excited we were able to come over together.

Q. You have a ton of great young players on this roster. Some here today. What does it mean to the culture of a program having these players stick around in a transfer portal and NIL era?

TROY TAYLOR: Really important. When we first arrived, we had lost 17 players. All but one had graduated. We lost them to the transfer portal. We had a young, inexperienced team for the most part.

We are a much more experienced team this year, much deeper team. Yeah, in this day and age, just having your

team stick around is a pretty big deal.

We try to treat our guys the right way. We want them to be here for four years. I think it's one of the appeals of Stanford. If you're smart enough to choose Stanford, I think you're smart enough to stay until you get your degree. That's what I'm counting on, at least.

Q. Coming over to the ACC, you're going to have to come West Coast to East Coast. You go to Syracuse, then to Clemson. What does that week look like? Coming early or...

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, we will return back so our students can go to class.

We have a pretty good plan. We're going to go out a day early. On a Saturday game, we'll go out on Thursday. Fly in the evening, hopefully get our players acclimated the next day, then we pick up three hours flying back to the West Coast.

Yeah, never done it before, back-to-back trips. There's harder things to do. Our guys do a great job of adjusting. They'll balance the two things of being a student and an athlete. We'll make sure that we do great things in terms of larger plane when we travel, going out a day early.

Q. Regarding player performance, who are some of the standout players on your team this season? What sets them apart?

TROY TAYLOR: Well, these three guys right here are three of the best. I'd say the things that sets them apart is their ability to stay focused, their consistency, how they train, how they treat their teammates, how they lead this team.

One of the things that I love about being at Stanford is the quality of individuals of our student-athletes. I tell them often that they inspire me. They're really the very best that college sports has to offer. These guys are intellectually curious. They want to make the world a better place. They want to be champions on the football field.



Typically in my experience, the better players are always the harder working guys, the mentally tough guys in terms of doing the same small things over and over again, the willingness to sacrifice. Those three gentlemen to my left all do these things.

Q. What does 'accomplish greatness' mean to you?

TROY TAYLOR: Accomplish greatness? I would say greatness is consistently doing the small things over and over again.

Q. Interacting with the players in the breakout room, in addition to yourself, it seems like there's a culture at Stanford in which they hold themselves to a high regard. Seems like Stanford is doing the right things. Do you feel that way? What are some examples of that?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, appreciate the question.

Yeah, I do feel that way. Our graduation rate for football players at Stanford is 97%. When they come to Stanford, they're making a decision to take their future and present, academically, seriously. Our guys go on to do great things. They're competitive in all aspects.

I'm very proud to be the head coach at Stanford and be able to represent the young men that are the very best in collegiate sports where they don't sacrifice being a great player for being a subpar student. They're all great students, people that do great things in the community, and are fierce competitors on the field.

I admire 'em all.

Q. You just completed your first season at Stanford. Now you get ready to embark upon another first season, that being inside the ACC. A bit of a wink and a smile, how do you keep your wits about you with so much professional change occurring?

TROY TAYLOR: Just process. Like I said, doing the small things every day, staying focused on those things.

Where we're playing and who we're playing, all those things are kind of secondary to our process and our preparation, what we do day in and day out. That's how we live.

Obviously you got to travel across the country a couple times, three times to be exact. Our guys will adapt. There's been harder things to overcome. We're just excited, really grateful to be in this conference, to play against great teams. We get to travel to three great

venues, Syracuse, Clemson and North Carolina State.

We're very grateful.

Q. For everybody who is not familiar with the program or with Stanford, do you have any pillars of your coaching program or things that you are passionate about that you haven't gotten to speak on, anything you want us to know?

TROY TAYLOR: Yeah, the things that are important to our program, we call it The Way of the Cardinal. It's love, mindful, gratitude and competitive. Love is the foundation of our program. 'Love' in the sense of we enjoy playing football. We love each other. We try to attract individuals, players, that really love football more than they love recruiting and all the other things. They really enjoy playing.

That's kind of how I'm built. I just love football. I love being around it and coaching it. I loved playing it. We want to attract players that love the game, love each other, love competing.

Being mindful is just trying to enjoy what you're doing, being in the moment, which is hard in high-level sports because it's so tied to winning and losing. We try to be very cognizant of enjoying each other, enjoying the moment. Win, we move on. Lose, we move on.

Then gratitude is something we talk a lot about. It's the most important factor in your own personal happiness is how grateful you are. Our guys are very grateful. They realize to be at a university like Stanford is an unbelievable opportunity and gift. To be in the ACC, to be here with y'all, it's an important part of who we are. We are not entitled to anything at Stanford. We feel very grateful to have it.

Competitive is the last kind of pillar for us. We compete like it's the most important thing in the world. At the end of the day, win or lose, we move on. We prepare like it's the most important thing but move on quickly.

Those are the things that we built our program on, and these guys represent those things every day.

Q. Your staff has been held together for 2024. I would imagine some of that comfort and planning, that is a relief for you?

TROY TAYLOR: We talk about in the program is continuity, culture and development, right? If you think about a family, families are better off if they're the same people that are there each day, right? Very important that

we create an environment our coaches enjoy and they feel valued. We have a great coaching staff. I want them to be there forever.

Same thing with the players. We want continuity with our players. One of the things that drew me to this job at Stanford, I really feel like we are going to be really an outlier in terms of having a roster where it's pretty similar from year to year, that there's not going to be a lot of transition. Stanford is a place, a destination place, that you draw a type of student-athlete to the campus, then they're there for hopefully the entire four years.

Then of course culture I talked about, The Way of the Cardinal.

Development. When you have players there for three or four years, you have to make them better. That's what I've done my whole life is develop players, whether high school or college, whatnot. If you got a culture and you're able to keep those players and they're able to get better every single year as opposed to just taking other people's players, if you're able to develop 'em, make 'em better, I think you have a real shot.

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