

Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Tavita Pritchard

Micah Ford

Jay Green

Davis Warren

Press Conference



We added seven teams in the ACC last year with nine-plus wins, nine teams with eight-plus wins, and 11 bowl teams.

We are, again, excited and energized by those challenges in front of us. Again, I'm excited to be here. I'm excited for these young men that sit up here that are representatives of our great university and football team.

At this point I'd like to open it up for questions.

Q. There's a phrase that says my barn having burned down, I can see the moon now. With the reentrance of you, people are seeing this program in a new light. How does your history in Palo Alto contribute to the new light of this program?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: I've never heard this phrase before. My barn having burned down. We do not have that one on the west coast. I didn't hear it my three years in the DC area.

You know what, I'm so excited to be back at my alma mater. Again, to be doing it with a group of people that were attracted to Stanford, chose Stanford for a reason. I'm very excited and appreciative not just for these young men but a number of our people, starting with the roster that we lost single digits worth of transfer portal entries.

For that reason we brought in a small amount. The staff that we brought in chose Stanford for our current state.

So much of what I've learned in my time away from Stanford are a lot about the themes that I learned while at Stanford, which is we have a tight-knit community, we have a tight-knit group that, again, it's attracted to our university and our football team because they want to be excellent.

We have a strong belief in Stanford in the saying that how you do anything is how you do everything. We don't believe because I want to be a great student and get an elite degree that my life as a football player, my career as a football player, has to suffer. We believe that you can do both, that you can do it all. These guys are representative of that.

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Hello, everyone. Tavita Pritchard, head coach.

First of all, thank you for having us. To the ACC, to the city of Charlotte, we've enjoyed our time here so far. We expect that to continue. We're grateful to be here.

We're excited to compete this season. As I was thinking about kind of the message for today, not just in here but throughout all of our activities and conversations that we will have, I was thinking about what I want you to know about this team, about these players.

We have a roster full of competitors. We have a building full of competitors. We have a staff full of competitors. What I'm most excited about is attacking this season with a bunch of competitors.

The way that we're going to approach our work is with that mindset, with the mindset that we're going to come into the building every single day with an energy and a focus that is intent on building a championship process with championship people.

Here at Stanford to build a championship, we know that's going to take a lot of hard work. We're clear-eyed about that. We know that work will be done in the meetings rooms, and especially on the practice field. I know our guys are excited and energized by that.

When I think about the ACC and the conference that we are in, it's going to be a challenge. We know that winning football games, period, is a challenge. It's hard. It is hard work. This will be no different.



How does my past experience help me? It is an understanding that what many perceive as challenges at our university and in program I see as strengths; I see as being the pathway and reason we will build this program up to be a championship program.

Q. What do you want the identity of this Stanford team to be in year one?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Competitors. You heard me say it. What Stanford football has always been full of, what the university is full of, are competitors. Let's not misunderstand what 'competing' means. It doesn't necessarily mean I need an opponent, I need a winner and loser. Oftentimes it means that. But it means being your best self every single day.

Our university lives that out. You have companies being started, you have Olympians in our athletic facility, you have guys that will go on and have NFL careers. Championships have been won here in the past; they will be won again.

Because of that, it's all borne out of how we compete, how we show up with energy and focus. I think about our spring ball, the 15 practices, the way these guys approached that, came out every single day. There was an energy. It was palpable.

The belief we have we can do something special this year is out there and they're living it every single day.

Q. You have a unique organizational structure at Stanford with Andrew being the GM. Obviously you have a past relationship with him. What has it been like working with him so far? What is the overall plan of player acquisition moving forward?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Andrew and I, we got to hit the fast forward button so to speak of our working relationship because we have a history.

I have a love, respect, and trust from Andrew from our time together a teammates, competitors, and then continuing on in our careers, as I went onto coach and he went to play in the NFL.

So much of what we do, we work together hand-in-hand on. When this role, opportunity came about, Andrew said to me, hey, I really need somebody to come in and coach football and hire a staff and develop players.

I love to do that. That's why I coach. There are so many things outside of those things in being a head coach that

I'm less excited about and things that I know Andrew does a great job of owning.

The way our structure is set up, we are a two-headed monster so to speak. We work really closely hand-in-hand. Andrew said this recently on an interview, and I guess now here I sit saying it publicly, as well. Andrew said, I talk to Tavita more than I talk to my wife, and that may be true, because we communicate a lot. A lot a lot.

Because we believe in setting up systems of support for these guys, making sure they have what they need every day so we're aligned on the vision, on the standard, aligned on the values so we can make the best decisions for our team and our program and these guys going forward.

Q. You've spoken about this program, what you're excited about. The foundational pillars of a Pritchard-run program, what are some of those pillars?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Competition -- I've said that one -- connection, and commitment. Those are the three that we'll build our program on, ones I've already mentioned.

I guess I can zero in on connection for you. One thing that I know to my core is that the team with the strongest connection has the best chance to win. Of course, there are other things that go into that.

We're going to be a team and a program that finds a way in the margins to win football games. We're going to play complementary football. One of those margins I know we can make up a lot of ground is how we connect to each other, how we play for each other, how we trust each other.

That's certainly going to be a hallmark of the team that we put out there on Saturdays - and Fridays (smiling).

Q. I know you mentioned you wanted to establish a winning culture here in the ACC. Is there one particular game that you and your team maybe have circled that you're hungry for a win at?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: You want the most coach speak answer today? The most important game is the first game. There it is (smiling).

Yeah, no, we're very excited about August 29th, about the University of Hawaii. We have a lot of work to do before that day arrives. Again, so much of what we're going to do and the value that we're going to put on how we prepare is what we do on the practice field.

So much of our preparation is going to be geared towards making sure we throw really, really effective, high-energy practices every opportunity we get.



That next opponent is the most important. That can't be overstated.

Q. This is your first head coaching experience of any kind. Normally when we see people make that jump from an assistant to a Power Four head coach, there's a bit of an adjustment, learning period. How do you prevent that and mitigate that? Is that something you've done through your staff, studying others who have done it before you, to defeat the first-time head coach blues?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Every head coach was a first-time head coach at one point. You are 100% right. What is the best way to mitigate the pitfalls that may arise?

I consider myself a lifelong learner. Part of that is making sure that I stay curious and I stay open to different ways of doing things. Knowing and understanding that I don't know everything. You mentioned the staff. Andrew and I, I believe, have built a world class staff. That's our football coaches, that's our support staff around, and it's really finding those experts that you trust, that you believe are a part of your ethos, living that out every day.

Then you trust them to go. Not micromanaging. I have a strong belief in the saying that all of us are smarter than one of us. As a head coach I think what's most important is I have the humility to say I don't know it all and that I'm going to make mistakes, because that is true.

Mitigating that as much as we can is the name of the game. There will be a learning curve. There will be failures, so to speak. I think the biggest thing for me is making sure we learn from 'em and we move on.

Q. Cal and Stanford are unique in they're west coast teams playing in the ACC. Any type of special preparation for some of those long-distance east coast travel trips?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Very much so. Having come from the NFL recently, we did some coast-to-coast trips. Making sure that we're exhausting all of our resources when it comes to research, making sure we're giving these guys the best chance to go out and play well every game day.

Absolutely, there's special consideration for trips across multiple time zones. We need to make sure we give these guys every chance possible to play their best ball. Whether that's what day we're getting there, the kind of nutrition they're getting, what we're doing on the plane for those longer flights, for sure is a consideration. Something

I'm not a stranger to just coming from the NFL.

Q. I've watched Stanford since John Ralston was there.

TAVITA PRITCHARD: Okay.

Q. Coach Christiansen, Coach Green, Coach Willingham, Jack Elway. Stanford always had, even as progressive as they were with Coach Walsh and Coach Ralston, able to run. That's certainly what Coach Shaw and Coach Harbaugh did. That identity has been missing the last couple of years. What can you do to get that back and how important is that element to getting Stanford?

TAVITA PRITCHARD: I was trying to glance over as you're asking that question to Micah Ford, our running back, to see about his excitement about this question about running the football.

I appreciate that question, especially thinking about the legacy of not just coaches but great history that comes before us in the Stanford program. It is something that we hope to build on, that legacy, and make sure that we are great stewards of that.

When it comes to identity and offensive identity, we're going to play a physical brand of football. We're going to have a toughness about us. It's something that I know Stanford men in particular to be champions have to be tough. It's a brand of football that we have to play.

When I mentioned energy and focus, Stanford guys, they possess a toughness I believe unlike others because of what they've been asked to do throughout their lives, not just on the football field, but beyond, and their ability to focus through adversity, through physical and mental pain and stress is different. It's something that we're going to promote and lean into.

When it comes to the run and pass game, we're going to be physical. To a large degree, you mentioned coach Walsh, who obviously for us, like he's on our Mount Rushmore, right, the guy who's meant so much to this game of football, but certainly to Stanford football.

He was innovative. So much of what he did was about bucking the trends in football at the time. We're going to look to do the same.

Without giving you our entire game plan, we're going to put pressure on the defense. I would say this, my version of balance, how I view it, is balance comes from the ability to run the football and the threat of running the football.



Micah is going to get some work this year, right? Our quarterback, about it Davis or one of our other guys, they'll also be se helm making sure we're putting so much pressure on the defense, making sure that we're attacking those guys and keeping them on their heels.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, we'll switch spots and put Micah at the podium. We'll take questions.

Q. How do you feel about the running back room this year, being one of the leaders, and its strengths right now?

MICAH FORD: Running back room is great. We have Sed Irvin, Chris Davis, Tuna Altahir, Champ Hampton. We're all strong backs, all different at different things, versatile.

At the end of the day we all could be trusted out there no matter what happens. Just know you have guys in the room that have your back, no matter if you go down or if you're up, it's definitely a great feeling.

Q. Last year you had the opportunity to work for Frank Reich, obviously a proven NFL guy. What was it like to work under him? Were you able to learn a lot about the NFL?

MICAH FORD: For sure, Coach Reich, he was very big on his faith and Christianity, which I really liked about that because I'm also big in those things as well. So just to kind of get that older experience of things, that NFL mindset, like you said, he kind of taught us what it takes, the different things that they do at this level.

It was very interesting to get his perspective of things.

Q. Are you aware of the fact that when you go over a hundred yards in your Stanford career, you all are 500, when you have not reached that mark, it's been a significantly worse record? As coach has said, you touching the ball means something. How do you stay healthy with your physical running style, that expectation of you got to carry some of this load, brother?

MICAH FORD: In terms of my role in this team, I'm well aware of the piece I do play in this team, what I have to do in order for us to win.

It's definitely a matter of me staying healthy. Definitely been taking care of that in the weight room, off the field, making sure I'm putting the right things in my body in terms of food and stuff along those lines. Then just staying in the weight room, making sure I'm taking preventive actions so I

can stay healthy throughout all 12 games, if even more.

Q. What does a Davis Warren-led offense look like? I know he's right over your shoulder.

MICAH FORD: I'm definitely not scared. Nothing bad to say about that guy, man (smiling).

It just feels secure, trusted. A space you can play freely. You're not tight. You can relax and drop your shoulders. At the end of the day we have one of the best quarterbacks in the country leading our team. I'm excited, and I mean that. I'm excited to get to work with him.

He's a wise guy when it comes to football. You can see the work he puts in. I know the type of year he's about to have. I can't wait for you guys to see it.

Q. What's one goal that you have set for yourself this season that might not show up on the stat sheet?

MICAH FORD: I would like that stay away from setting the goals. I like to take it game by game and plate what it is. At the end of the day everything happens for a reason. You can't really get mad at yourself for not reaching that goal 'cause maybe that day you just weren't supposed to and it's supposed to come.

I definitely would say definitely catch the ball more out the backfield. We'll get that situated, for sure. Coach got something cooking (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Jay Green, we'll spend a few minutes with you.

Q. What is one piece of advice that you've received from any coach that has helped define your football career?

JAY GREEN: I would say that the game comes down to wins and losses, the work is all done in the preparation. At first I just thought you go out there and everybody just play.

I think football is very simple: one team is trying to stop the other, the other team is trying to stop the other. It just comes down to wins and losses.

Q. Jay, you ended up signing an endorsement deal with Nike. Looking back as a kid, how does it feel to be in this moment? Did you of ever expect that to happen?

JAY GREEN: Yeah, I think that's every kid's dream of course. I know growing up Nike schools were the biggest schools, like Oregon and stuff like that, things like that. I



was very fortunate to sign that. I'm grateful for the situation. I think I fulfilled my childhood dream when it comes to that.

Q. How have you been trying to grow and develop as a leader for this defense?

JAY GREEN: Right, I feel like growing as a leader in defense is kind of not up to me, I would say. I think it's more up to my teammates and how they view me as a player, not even a player but as a person. You know what I mean?

I think it's important for me to encourage the young guys to come up with me and watch tape. I work out Monday, Wednesday, Friday. I think it's important to bring guys with me on the field, teach those guys how to do things.

This thing is like a process. It's almost like scrambling eggs, stuff like that. I think you got to take it one day at a time, you got to get the finished product.

Q. You were a member of that Washington team that went to a National Championship. Now you're on a Stanford team that not only historically but as of late has not seen that level of success. What type of winning habits and whatnot have you taken from that team and tried to insert into not only your game, but as a leader saying, I've been there, I've seen this; this is what a championship mindset looks like.

JAY GREEN: Yeah, I think it's important in this example to lead by example, if anything. I think I can of course tell people, Hey, I was I was on that team that went to the natty. That necessarily means nothing to that certain extent.

I think it's important to show people that my actions, that's how you win games. That's how you up bring young cats into the locker room. That's how you progress your room as far as the DBs into to go the top room in the country. You know what I mean?

I think my part of being vocal of course, but I think leading by example is more important.

Q. Chris Richard being the director of defense and the DBs coach, what can you say about his style and presence, what you feel like this defense is going to look like?

JAY GREEN: Yeah, he brings a certain type of energy to the room that he's kind of a force in a room. When he walks in the room, you know he's there. I'm grateful as a DB picking his brain every single day, understanding the

schemes of what offenses are going to do, or what we're necessarily going to see. You know what I mean?

He's been coaching at a high level for a long time. Not many things that come across his plate that he doesn't know about. Grateful to have him in my back pocket. I use him more as a resource and just to learn him as a guy I think is good too.

Q. Last year you had a 49-yard scoop and score. Do you think about such opportunities pregame?

JAY GREEN: I mean, of course I always try to see what big play I can make. I didn't see that one before the game, of course, but I'm blessed that it happened. It was a good moment to share with my teammates and of course the fans out there of Stanford football. I wish many more moments happen like that in big games, too.

Q. You spent your previous time at Michigan around a lot of great coaches and a championship culture. What drew you to Stanford in your transfer process?

DAVIS WARREN: Yeah, I think going into the portal, you never really know what to expect. But I think it's been everything I could ask for and then some.

I think the first conversation we had, me and Coach Pritchard and Coach Luck, I could just -- I could see myself in this situation, being a part of a group that loves football, that wants to push me to be good at football, push the guys to be the best team that we can be, then just develop me as a quarterback.

I think that's something that I was looking for. Between Coach Luck, Coach Pritchard and Coach Lindgren we have an incredible group. I don't think there's any better group in the country to develop as a quarterback than right here at Stanford.

It's been everything I could hope for. Just excited to let it go on Saturdays.

Q. You said when you were looking at Stanford you were looking for someone to develop you as a quarterback. Knowing that your coach was an NFL QB coach, was that the main quality that attracted you? Were there others?

DAVIS WARREN: Yeah, that's definitely one of the biggest ones. I want to win. There's no one who wants Stanford more to win than Coach Pritchard and this group. That was really important to me.

Yeah, obviously seeing what he did with Jayden Daniels, I



was with Jayden a couple months ago. He FaceTimed Coach Pritchard immediately. They were talking like they were old friends. So seeing how much he meant to him was super cool to see.

I know that I'm in good hands and can play the game with conviction, conviction that he understands what I'm going through in the pocket on a play-to-play basis, and also he will stand behind me with whatever happens.

I think if you can play the game as quarterback with conviction, then you can be the best version of yourself. I'm excited to do that for the guys.

Q. The way that things went down in Michigan is well-documented. What are the things that you took away, that you could say, hey, this did not work out there; this went wrong there, but I learned from it?

DAVIS WARREN: Yeah, I think I wouldn't say, like, everything didn't go exactly how I wanted it to go. Like it was a great place and I'm very grateful for my time there and it being a part of my journey.

I think the biggest thing I learned is just learned what a championship culture looks like firsthand, and learned like what a championship coach looks like firsthand, what it takes out of a starting quarterback, what it takes in player-run practices, what it takes in the weight room in the off-season, what it takes in the winter, in spring ball, in fall camp, what does it take to go win a championship.

I know we have the horses to do that here. It's going to take all of us just believing every single snap that we have what it takes to win a championship. That's what I felt there. I'm feeling that here. I believe wholeheartedly in our ability to do that.

Q. Stanford is the most academically prestigious university in the world. When I went blind 13 years ago, diabetes took my sight, to have vision you have to be a leader. Being at Stanford, they're going to be able to see through anything if you're not being true to yourself. How do you develop your leadership skills to be able to make them know that you're really for them?

DAVIS WARREN: Yeah, that's a great question.

I think the first thing was just kind of like Jay Green talked about, you got to just do first. I think that's something me and Coach Pritchard talked about when I first showed up. Your actions speak so loud they can't hear what you're saying. You need to speak with your actions, the way you go about business on a day-to-day. Whether that's in the weight room, doing extra work with the guys. I'm always

texting Micah and the guys to get extra work in. I'm just seeing it firsthand.

When the time comes to say something, have conviction in what you're saying, and knowing that you've earned the right to talk. That was something that I had to earn. I'm still earning every single day.

We're working together as a leadership council and the coaching staff to keep pushing these guys to be great.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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