

July 24, 2014



An interview with

COACH SHAW

COACH SHAW: Good afternoon, today we've brought Kevin Hogan, starting quarterback, and Jordan Richards, starting safety for us. Bottom line for us, we don't look at the past. The things we've accomplished in the past are great, but we're looking forward to see what we can accomplish in the future. We've lost a lot of senior leadership, but that's what happens every year. Every year you lose guys and guys step up. I'm excited about where we are, and the fact that we're bringing back a three-year starting quarterback.

Bringing back one of the most explosive players in college football in Ty Montgomery. Led a young, athletic line that needs to gel for us. Looking forward to the new tight ends that will step in, and the receiving corps and rotation in running backs that will be exciting to watch defensively. It's a good chance we'll start four fifth year seniors, potentially one senior.

But we're talking about a veteran group that's learned how to play at a high level. And we'll see who our senior leaders emerge throughout training camp and the regular season. But we have an experienced team that I think can play with the best in the nation. But bottom line is every week we play it's going to be tough. Our opponents in the conference are tough top to bottom, and that's just where we are. So it's going to be an exciting year, and we can't wait.

Q. On hiring coaches from within

COACH SHAW: Well, Bob, when he hired me, we talked about taking the ups and downs out of Stanford football. And part of consistency, honestly, consistent winning is continuity. We want to have a continuity to us that we don't change schemes every week just because one guy leaves. We have young coaches that we are teaching and growing and can promote from within. Periodically we'll go out and get a new coach as we did in Duane Akina who coaches defensive backs for us.

But for the most part, we like what we do. We want to keep our scheme. If a guy leaves, that's great, we'll pat him on the back and promote from within.

Q. On if college football is still about the running game

COACH SHAW: Every team is different. There is an element, I believe especially with the spread runs and the gun runs etc., the quarterback driven runs that keep college football in that running mode, and people are taking advantage of what you're doing to stop the run and throw the ball.

So those two things I think are working together extremely well. You'll still see some teams run the ball a lot. Just keep the balance of the football and the quarterback holding the ball. As far as what we'll do, no one has taken over the running backs throughout spring ball. I think every running back we have has a unique ability. If we have a group of guys that can all help us win a football game, I want to play them all and let them have that opportunity to help us win.

Q. On the number of running backs that will be used

COACH SHAW: Right off the bat there are four. Kelsey Young came out probably the cleanest of the running backs through spring football. Fast, explosive. We saw him play receiver last year. Couple games as a kickoff returner. He's an explosive football player that's physical and strong. Barry J. Sanders, quick and explosive. Making this type of running back that is learning how to become a complete back. I'm excited to see him play more this year. Remound Wright has been steady at back. We played him a lot throughout the course of the year last year coming in. Some are situations and some on base downs. Ricky Seale, who is a fifth year senior for us. Every time he's played, he's made great plays for us on special teams. We have Christian McCaffrey who is a phenomenal high school football player and leading Colorado as the state career rushing leader, touchdown leader for his career.

So we feel like we have a great group of guys. If one guy outperforms the others and becomes more of a steady guy, that's great. I'll let that happen naturally. That's great. I'd love to have a chance to influence our games.

Q. On rotating running backs

COACH SHAW: I love it. I'd love being able to rotate guys. Stephan Taylor had a phenomenal career for us. His last year was kind of our main bell cow. But the year before that, we played him. We played Tyler Gaffney. We played Anthony Wilkerson. Rotated guys in and out, and played Jeremy Stewart. We had a four back rotation that worked for us, and took us to two straight BCS Bowl games over the original Orange Bowl and Fiesta Bowl.

So I know rotating backs in different styles work. One guy gets more of the lion's share, that means he's learn earned it, and that will be great also.

Q. On Barry J. Sanders

COACH SHAW: Barry's grown a lot. He's got the privilege and burden of his name. To where he gets a lot of attention. But at the same time he knew he had a lot to learn. He came in, and he's learned and grown a lot. We've a lot of protection adjustments. It's time for him to see the field. We're going to put him in there and play him like we do the rest of the guys. If he stays, great, if one guy does more than the other guys, great.

There will be days where he looks like his father, and that's exciting, and that's awesome. He doesn't think of it that way. He just wants to be himself, which I commend him for because there can be a lot of internal and external pressure to live up to what his dad was. But he's trying to be Barry J. Sanders. He enjoys his time. He's doing very well in school and he's loving football and having a very good time.

Q. On running backs making plays in space

COACH SHAW: That's one thing Tyler Gaffney gave us was the big playability, and more breaking tackles and maybe run away from guys. Or that's the thing with Darius. It might be one-on-one space, but that guy might not tackle him or touch him. To have a guy with that unique ability in space is a true positive for our offense.

Q. What are you expecting out of Kodi Whitfield?

COACH SHAW: The thing with Kodi, he is going to give us some depth initially. He is going

to be a really good safety. Day one, we put him back and he was smooth. He didn't understand all the calls, but he was always in the right spot. When we were recruiting him we almost had to flip a coin because he could play safety or receiver. We have gotten to the point where we think we're loaded at receiver, and some guys we have. And now he gives us some depth at safety. He's going to rotate and play a lot.

Q. I know it might be a long way off. Does he remind you of a potential future career path with the former Stanford wide receiver Richard Sherman?

COACH SHAW: Different abilities, different body type, different position. For me, he's more of an Ed Reynolds, he moves like Ed. That's why I kind of got excited because he reminds me of Ed. He's long. He's smooth. He's smart. He makes great tackles. He's in great position, never out of position. For a guy flipping from offense to defense, he's a hitter. He'll face first and try to tackle guys, so I'm excited to see that.

Q. On Ty Montgomery recovering

COACH SHAW: We are going to be cautious with Ty at training camp. We've had an arm issue that we've taken care of. It will be close after that first game. We might just hold off on that first game completely. We'll see where he is with the USC game and see where he's ready to play. Bottom line for Ty, when he comes back, he might be the most explosive player in college football, and he's going to touch the ball in every single way possible. He's going to be a huge part of our offense, because he is a difference maker.

Q. On Ty Montgomery contributing in multiple ways

COACH SHAW: Oh, there is no question. If I told Ty that he was not going to return kickoffs, he might go into a state of depression. He loves it. It's one of those things that he's a natural. I remember Desmond Howard at the Oakland Raiders, and we tried to make Desmond into more of a slot receiver and do a little less on special teams. He looked at me one day and said this is who I am. I love punt return and kickoff return. That is the way Ty Montgomery is. He just wants the ball. And gosh, having your starting receiver as the kickoff returner. I love it.

I expect him to just be himself. There is going to be a lot of talk of where is he going to get drafted. Is he going to be up for the Heisman, the Biletnikoff, an All-American. All of that talk is going

to happen. I want Ty to have fun and relax. He's at his best when he's in his zone and loving the game. It could be a short pass, a long pass, it could be handed off to him on reverse and he could have a chance to score.

He is similar to a Tim Brown. Punt returner, kickoff returner, runs, reverses and catches the ball. There is nothing on the football field he can't do.

Q. On not being picked to win the Pac-12 in the preseason media poll

COACH SHAW: It doesn't matter. I don't use it as motivation. I don't get happy or sad about it. It is what it is. I might pick Oregon also. Who knows? Someone that athletic and the way Marcus Mariota and his future looks, I mean, why not? Bottom line is we've all got to play the games. Doesn't matter who is favorite or who is picked, the game is going to start and the guy's have to play. We have to play 12 tough ones to earn anything beyond that.

So all of that stuff will bear itself out. The media thinks they're great for four or five days and once you start the season, all those things go away and don't matter. One thing that matters is who is getting ready at training camp and who is playing best during the course of the year.

Q. On the team tackling in practice

COACH SHAW: We still do it. We'll tackle and push the envelope. We'll do as much as we can as far as being physical and tackling. We've got systems where we do it as safe safely as possible. We try to stay off each other's legs. We've been one of the healthier teams in the nation also. We do a great job in strength and conditioning. We do a great job in the training room. I think our coaches understand that this is not pro mag anyone football. We're not just slamming guys heads together. Defensively we work on fundamentals of rotation every single day. Guys are tackling the proper way. Their heads are up, they're shooting their arms, driving their legs, tackling to keep themselves healthy and keep the guys back at tackle.

So everything we do, there is a method to the madness. But you have to be physical. You have to play football as we call it. Tackling guys to the ground.

During the course of the year we won't tackle at all, really. During the season we won't tackle at all. We'll have one practice with the freshmen, the guys that aren't playing. They'll have one practice where they tackle, but nobody else tackles throughout the regular season. In the

off-season in training camp we'll have days where we have one period or two periods of tackling, and then two long scrimmages we have. And that's about it. But the bottom-line is to play fast, to play physical. We're wearing shoulder pads, we might as well use them.

You have to give them opportunities to do it in practice, because how else will you know if you don't give them those opportunities? A lot of things are done away with the 9 on 7s the run drill. But we'll do it as we put the pads on in training camp, we'll do it every day. It's part of football if we can do it safely, and smartly, and in a controlled setting. We're not jumping up and down making guys run 50 yards head-to-head. We're putting them in close quarters. This is what the game is. There are a lot of collisions and a lot of high explosions. If we continue to do that, we'll continue to play the same way we do every Saturday.

Q. On people stepping up as leaders after losing leaders last year

COACH SHAW: The biggest thing for us has been their vocal leadership. Ed Reynolds is a phenomenal communicator. You see Jordan pick up that flack in the back end, and you see Jordan pick up that slack to a certain degree. We caution them, don't try to be Shayne Skov, don't try to be somebody else. Lead with your own personality. I think our guys have done a great job of doing that.

Q. On coaching in the Pac-12

COACH SHAW: I think what you have to do in our conference is similar to what you have to do in the NFL. Where every week you have a different opponent with a different style offense, different style of defense. A more unique way of approaching the game. That is the way it is in the NFL. Every week is challenging. You're not going to play the same spread offense. You're going to play different types of spread offense. I think our coaching and our conference has been phenomenal, continues to be phenomenal. Our coaching roster, I'd put it up against anybody. Add to the roster what we have in our conference, and you're going to have those types of games and those types of opportunities for guys that do well in our conference to move on, because those NFL GMs and NFL owners see what we do in our conference, and it's high-level, complex football. This is difficult. Every week, every game plan is difficult, and you have to try to decide what the other team is doing and have a plan for it.

Q. On social media

COACH SHAW: My general comment on social media, Twitter in particular, is that it's been the best and the worst thing for a lot of young people. There is such potential for so much damage to be inflicted upon other people, so much damage to be self-inflicted by what is done and said on social media. We constantly counsel our guys on portraying the image that you want. These are not personal conversations. This is a window into your world. So show people what you want them to see.

Social media is not a place to go on and complain about what's going on in your life and pick a fight with this guy and do all the things. That is a waste of time. You're putting a lot of negativity out there the in the world that only comes back to you. So use the social media to put positivity out in the world. That is the take I say on it. If you have something negative to say to somebody, pick up the phone, call them and talk to them. Let's not let the world in on everything that goes on in your life. I have to tell them, myself included, our day-to-day lives are not that interesting. Nobody needs to know what I'm doing every ten minutes. Fight that urge to let everybody know what's going on in your life. Have some privacy for this is just for me. This is just for me and my close friends, instead of letting the world in on every part of your life.

Q. On playing tough road games

COACH SHAW: We try to not concentrate on who we play or where we play. We concentrate on how we play. It's kind of a saying that we have, but it really applies to this year because you can say it's daunting. It's one of the most difficult in the nation. But if you want to be really good, why not travel a tough road? Why not go play at these stadiums all in one year? Why not. It's a test of who we are and a test of our character. Can we go on the road and play great football and come back the next week and go on another tough season and play great football again?

That is the bottom line I think for us. Hopefully the schedule is not just tough on us. Hopefully we make the schedule tough on the team that's we're playing against because we think we're a good football team. And a good football team should be able to go into another team's stadium and give them a good game. And that's what we plan on doing.

I'm curious to see when you play a couple home games and you go on the road for a tough game and you go win that game, it's different than being on the road two games in a row and coming back home and going on the road again. That is a

different mentality. We'll do some things making sure we keep our legs. Just making sure we're fresh for those games.

But the mentality of going on the road is just a mentality. You've got to be able to go in there, put your chest out and say we don't care if we have 50-60-70,000 people screaming at us. We're coming to get a job done.

Q. On the offensive line

COACH SHAW: There is no question. I believe the group is ready. We'll see for sure. We have a couple of battles going on. But this could potentially be our most talented offensive line we've ever had. As far as experiences we've ever had, that's where it's going to be interesting to see if this entire line can gel and operate as one unit as they have had to, to be successful. It might take a couple of games because of the lack of experience, but as far as the athleticism, the ability that these guys have, it's exciting. Hopefully it happens this year. If it doesn't, hopefully it happens next year. But this group should be together for the next couple of years. I hope to see these guys flourish.

Q. On Kodi Whitfield moving to safety and how Stanford will use their many defensive backs

COACH SHAW: Kodi has made the transition very smoothly. He's a natural safety. It's been an easy transition for him, even before he knew all the calls, he was in the right spots. He's a physical player. He's a group tackler. He's a great communicator as you need on the back end there. You need great communication. He's going to rotate into play for us. I don't know that he'll start right away. Right now he's our third safety which means he's going to play, 30, 40 plays a game. With these high up-tempo offense that we have, he's going to play a lot of football for us.

We just roll them, just roll them. It's too hard to make it so specific because in the course of the game.

Q. On the pace of the offense

COACH SHAW: Well, that is the thing. During the course of the game we want to try to do some up-tempo stuff because they have the pace of so many up-tempo teams. It's hard to change those guys unless you change them in the series. It's hard to rotate guys in and out during the course of the series because the ball's getting past them in the field or ten guys.

So we'll have somewhere some guys will get more during the course of practice, and the other guys will get a lot more. But we'll still do our deals to split the practice up where guys get a lot of reps on two different fields. But I know all those DBs are going to play a lot of football for us.

Q. On what's next for quarterback Kevin Hogan

COACH SHAW: The next thing is mastery and leadership, being a leader of the offense, and eventually leader of the football team.

Q. On being picked second in the media poll

COACH SHAW: I don't think we've ever been picked number one, so it's par for the course. I don't really look at those things at all. They don't affect me one way or the other. I don't get motivated by them. You could pick us last, and I still wouldn't get upset by it because it doesn't matter. What matters is when games start playing, what happens at the end of each game. Hopefully we win more than we lose and find a way to be at the top of our conference.

I would be shocked if somebody picked us over Oregon to be honest. I don't mind it one bit. They've got a lot of guys coming back as we do. My assertion, which I said last year and I held to last year and held this year, the best quarterback in the nation in Marcus Mariota. I think he was the best in the nation last year also. There is nothing like him in college football.

So I don't mind that at all. Bottom line, we've still got to play the football games. We've got to play the games. We're going to have to go up to Autzen Stadium in a tough environment where they're gunning for us. It will be a tough game to win, but we'll go up there and give it our best shot.

Q. On the number of solid quarterbacks in the conference

COACH SHAW: Never seen anything like this. Never seen anything like this where you have multiple guys in our conference that you could say could be the number one pick overall in the draft. You have multiple guys in the conference that could be All-Americans and could lead the nation in quarterback rating or lead the nation in yards and yards per attempt in touchdown passes, and that could be any of five or six guys that could do this that this year.

I've never seen anything like this. I can't wait for some of these guys to get out of our conference, which I thought a couple would last

year and they disappointed me and came back. But I think it's going to make for exciting football. I think the defensive coordinators will have their hands full all year accounting for the combination of these schemes and they're intricate and difficult and different.

But there all also some great players mixed in those teams. You look at Brett Hundley, he can take off and run maybe not as fast as Marcus, but he can get you some touchdowns and run for touchdowns also. So every week in our conference, you're going to have to play against a really good quarterback.

Q. On Mike Riley and if he's an ambassador for the Pac-12 coaches

COACH SHAW: Mike's kind of a godfather. He's the one that we always volunteer for anything that comes up. He's our liaison to everything, anybody, everywhere because he's got such national respect. As a football coach, yeah, of course, but as a man he's an above-the-board kind of guy. He's the guy you trust going to talk to the NCAA, going to talk to the AFCA or the commissioner. Talking about things like we have this year. He's a phenomenal spokesman for college football and particularly for us. We're very fortunate to have him in our conference. I wish he was top quarterback. He disappointed me there. But Mike's been kind of that guy for us that we all kind of look up to.

Q. People have said you're not growing, but falling back. When you analyze your program, what are some of the things you guys need to do to get better around the program?

COACH SHAW: I think for us to be able to handle all the things that come in the course of the season. Whereas you look at last year, and never making any excuses, we played phenomenal against every ranked opponent that we played, and we lose tough games against unranked opponents that we're supposed to beat. Even though you watch on film, these are really good football teams. You're not going to find a more talented unranked football team than you had at USC or the Utah team that had Arizona State down, that had UCLA down, and had Oregon State down and those teams came back and beat them.

But they got us and made more plays than we did. But for us to be able to say, hey, we have to play a high level every single week if you want to be one of those great programs or be one of the best programs in the nation as we tried to be. You

have to bring it every week. You can't back off just because we just played Oregon, and then we played Washington back-to-back and you can't get up in the third week. That's not an excuse. You have to get up for the next week, because that's where our conference is. The moment you take your foot off the gas pedal, you're going to take one on the chin.

Q. On how he feels about the team's running backs

COACH SHAW: I'm excited. Tyler Gaffney came in and took over last year, and there was no question about it. All the running backs saw it. He was on a different level. He was phenomenal. This year we have more variants. We have different body types, guys that do things differently. We have guys that have some natural ability, and we're going to give those guys an opportunity. I think if you ask either one of those guys, I think they recognize the ability of different players I don't know that there is a guy that says I'm going to be the guy that gets those 30 carries a game. Whereas they look at the other guy and say I can't keep Kelsey Young off the field. I can't keep Ricky Seale off the field. He does things that are phenomenal. I can't keep Barry J. off the field. He does things that are really special. We have a group of guys that have a lot of talent. I think they've actually gelled as a group. They feel like they're a tag team wrestling team. They tag off and next guy goes in to get it. I think we've developed that kind of mentality.

Q. Did you immediately start watching Boise State film when Chris Petersen was hired?

COACH SHAW: Thing is at Boise they've played a lot of Pac-12 opponents. We've seen a lot of their film in all three phases. So we have an idea of what they do and what they've been about. But we'll play them extremely early and they'll have some games under their belts. So knowing Chris, and that he's going to have a prepared football team that every year they've been competitive at Boise. Whether they've had great NFL players that are moving on or progressed. They've always played at a high level. I think he's going to do extremely well at Washington, I was not necessarily excited for him to join the Huskies. But I actually was happy for his and his family. I do think it's a great situation for him. But he's going to build something special up there in Washington.

Q. Did you know Petersen much before he came?

COACH SHAW: We got to know each other over the last couple of years, both being Nike teams and going on the Nike coaches trip. Our wives have gotten to know each other. He and I hit it off. We're becoming good friends. I really like him and respect him. I think he's going to do really well up in Washington.

Q. On Jim Mora

COACH SHAW: I think you make a case of what Jim Mora has done in the last two years at UCLA is as good as what anybody's done in the nation. As far as rebuilding a program or given a program an identity or recruiting-wise, as far as what they've done and style of play, they've become a physical, get-after-you football team. He and I have a lot in common being sons of NFL defensive coaches. Guys that want to play smash mouth, tough-guy football. And you've seen that come to fruition down in UCLA. Just like years you would not say that about Stanford, and you would not say that about UCLA. I give Coach Mora all the credit in the world. Those guys can line up repeatedly. They've got a great quarterback that can do it all. They have a good running game. They have a good passing game. They've had good offensive line play.

So I mean, he's built something in UCLA that was not there before. You could make the case that nobody in the nation has done as good of a job at building a program that's Jim Mora.

Q. Talk about the general leadership of the team

COACH SHAW: We're in a unique position to where we only recruit leaders. They have to be leaders. So we have a platform where all we're going to do is compete like crazy and I'll never pick the leaders. Leadership just rises. So you have a group of leaders that the cream might rise to the top. I think leadership has to be organic. It has to come out and come from within. As guys start to exhibit those leadership characteristics we'll see that without ever saying you're going to be a leader and you're going to be a leader. Just like last year, we've always had two captains, and the vote was so close and so tight we had to choose four because the players chose four. All of those guys were voted right about the same, which means the team felt those were the four best guys to lead the team. Who am I to pick two out of those four? These are the guys our team chose, and I'm going to put them in front of them.

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