

# Pac-12 Conference Football Media Days

Wednesday, July 25 2018

## Jonathan Smith Oregon State Beavers



**Q. What did you find out about being a head coach that you realized you had to do that you didn't in the past, the media stuff?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Oh, yeah, the media piece, and understanding it's such a large operation, and how many people you deal with on a day-to-day basis has been a little different. I kind of came in with all eyes wide open. Not doing it before, knew I was going to learn a ton and experience it. So expecting the unexpected.

**Q. Going back home, that's where you played college ball, some of your old spots still there?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Oh, yeah. Watering holes are still there. Some of the people that have been there a long time, and back to when I was there. So the place is a great place with great people, and that hasn't changed.

**Q. Timmy Hernandez, Kolby Taylor, what do those guys bring to the table?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I thought both Timmy and Kolby had great spring practices. I was impressed with their understanding of the game, they were creative and made some plays. Just the understanding how to get open, when to get open is important. So we're going to be counting on those guys to continue and improve through August camp, but we'll be counting on them in the fall, for sure.

**Q. How would you describe the vibe around the program and the town with the transition?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I think there is some excitement. I really do. I think it's a fresh start, obviously, with some of the -- with me coming back. We've got a lot of former players coming back, which has been a bunch of fun, and they're excited.

I think that's important for our players to see some of these former guys that have played, done some great things, to come back, talk about their experience at Oregon State and Corvallis to really let these guys know that it is a great place. You can do some great things here. So I think it's an exciting time.

**Q. What elements of Dennis Erickson's style do you have in your coaching game?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Oh, gosh. A lot, for sure. I try to

have a lot. I think I learned a ton in regards to competing and into motivating, and never backing down. Those are some of his attributes that I've linked on to for sure. I think his ability to evaluate talent is something that a lot of people don't talk about. His ability, every stop he's made in recruiting and evaluating guys that can play this game.

**Q. How similar is your offense going to be to what we saw when you were at Washington?**

JONATHAN SMITH: What I like about what we did at Washington is we were able to be multiple. In regards to we had some different schemes really week in and week out, from a defensive side, preparing for that, but also it allowed for us to be able to attack defenses because we had different attributes to our offense.

So at Oregon State, for sure, we're going to build to be looking and have the ability to be multiple. You're going to get the coach speak, sure, trying to put the players to work to their strengths in what we've got right now. I think we had a great spring ball of doing that. But I'd like to grow to be multiple.

**Q. You talk a little bit about, do you have the personnel to do what you want to do, or are you having to adjust more to what you have?**

JONATHAN SMITH: We're definitely going to work with what we have. We've got some talent. I'm excited about it. Those guys, we don't have quite the number of tight ends just in the room like we did at U-Dub. So growing in that perspective. We've got some playmakers on the outside.

So we might be lighter than we were in regards to the personnel we put out there, but it still comes down to me running the football and our quarterback making great decisions with it.

**Q. Can't force culture, but you've seen good culture built. How do you do that from this point?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I think it's important to work at it on a daily basis. You don't just talk about it, and have a team meeting two days later and talk about it again. I think it's a day-to-day process. I think you point out when it's going well, you point it out when it's not going right and it's lower than the standard.

So I think the culture in that process is a day-today-

thing, and we're working at it.

**Q. You don't play Utah this year, but what made them a difficult opponent for you at Washington?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Utah, their physicality for sure. Especially on the defensive side.

Those guys run a scheme that is sound, and those guys are physical. They challenge you a lot defensively. They're not scared to pressure. Not scared to play man coverage. And it really starts with those guys on the defensive front. They've always had good D-linemen.

That makes part of the problems in the run game, putting pressure on the quarterback. All those things make it tough.

**Q. What were your first impressions of Hamilcar Rashed?**

JONATHAN SMITH: For his size, I liked his athleticism. First impression. He's a good looking kid and all those things, but his athleticism to run around. He's not shy. He can play physical. Really, I was impressed to watch his effort on special teams. You know, some of these guys that are pretty good players, probably starters, they don't play a ton of special teams. So that guy's all about special teams play. So we're expecting big things from him.

**Q. Coach, could you talk about Brian Lindgren, and what you liked about him when you went to hire him, and what he's brought to your team?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, Brian, I've liked him for a long time. We've known each other for a long time. Always respected his ability to game plan. In this league, coaches steal ideas all the time. He was one of the guys that we'd be a go to of watching his tape on what they're doing. I thought we always did a good job with the quarterback in regards to working to their strengths.

So felt fortunate to have him come aboard. I thought it was important to in his experience in this league calling plays. I didn't want to bring a guy in to hand off the offense to and he's going to call the plays. If he really hadn't done it in a high level, we're calling plays against each other in the Pac-12 Championship. So really fired up to to have him.

**Q. How much has he brought to your team, and what's he done with the quarterback so far?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I thought he did a great job in the spring, because it was important to start him at a foundational level of learning, new scheme, new terminology, new fundamentals on drops, and how you're carrying it. So I thought he brought a ton to that

quarterback room to start. I think he's been awesome in the summer of having a plan for them on what they're learning, what they're studying. So I feel like that position is in good hands.

**Q. What are you expecting early?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I want to see these guys competing and improving. I really do. I don't want to shy away from anything week in and week out. At the end of the day, I think it's about winning football games. I think it's important to get the foundation right and being able to build things off of that.

But I want to see them competing for 60 minutes, and I want to see them improving and working to improve from Game 1 to Game 12. Those two things I want to see.

**Q. Half the teams in this league have new head coaches this year. What do you anticipate being the impact of that on the way the Pac-12 does business, the style of play, all that stuff?**

JONATHAN SMITH: You know, I'm not totally certain, just being one of the new guys. I think it's an impressive group of coaches, and I think it's an impressive group in their records and track records of winning games, championships, they're developmental players. So I think we've got some great personalities that can sell this conference. Because there is a bunch of good coaches right now in this league to make it competitive, and then the players itself.

It's a track record of a league that phenomenal players have come in here and gone on and done great things. I'm just excited to be a part of it.

**Q. Do you remember the conversation you had with Coach Beamer when you said, hey, I've got the job, I'm going, I'm leaving, and what his words were for you then?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Obviously, we did talk when I was leaving. I think it was pretty brief in regards to just letting him know how appreciative I was of the opportunities he's had for me the last six years. Learned a ton and all those things.

Couple small pieces of advice, but nothing earth-shattering. It's not like the relationship has ended. We've talked and we see each other and those things. Hopefully we'll see each other for a long time being in the Pac-12 North.

**Q. Coach Petersen talked about he said he still feels like they're building and haven't arrived yet. You've been there for some build. How hard is that?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Building is tough. I lived it there.

And you're always kind of building. I don't know that you've ever completely arrived. I'd agree with that. So I think you've got to enjoy that part. It's not easy. It is going to be hard. Building is tough. This league's tough. But enjoying that process and that challenge, that's why I keep going back. I'm excited to be doing it.

**Q. Can you keep that enthusiasm in the locker room if you're not getting the result?**

JONATHAN SMITH: That's not easy. It's not. You've got to work at it and continue to sell the message and continue to improve. But at the end of the day, the thing is about winning and finding ways to win games, and that's definitely a huge piece of building.

**Q. With all the team went through last year and obviously their last game, they lost 69-10 at Oregon. Did you have to build guys' morale up when you got there?**

JONATHAN SMITH: You know, I was aware -- that was an unbelievable experience, such a unique experience for those kids that last year, that I didn't dwell on that, didn't talk about it a lot. But I definitely think there were things to learn from. Because that team was in some games. Shoot, they're playing us, they're right in that game. So there are some things to learn from.

I wanted to come in with a message of I've experienced it here. I've sat in those seats. I've gone through a coaching change when I was a player. It's been done before. We can do it again. So trying to be authentic that I've lived it, and I want to help them do the same.

**Q. How do you feel about opening up against a cupcake like Ohio State?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, that's one way to start, for sure. I go back to it's a great opportunity. I've never been in that stadium. I bet none of these kids have been in the state, let alone the stadium. So it's one way to start.

We're going to go in there swinging. We're going to go in there with an opportunity, we only get 12 Saturdays guaranteed, and see where we're at. I think it's great to be on a national stage, at a national power, to experience that. But really be focused on improvement from that game to the next to the next and the process of it.

**Q. Beyond winning more games, what constitutes a successful season?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Again, I go back to improvement, competing. Doing things right on and off the field. I think all that stuff is important. Understanding that it's a process. But the senior class doesn't want to hear about that. It is about competing and improving immediately to come around and find ways to win

games on Saturdays.

**Q. Is there an under-the-radar player that you can't wait to see play, to see how he adjusts to Pac-12 play on the team?**

JONATHAN SMITH: You know, I'm excited about Calvin Tyler, didn't play a ton. But he had a really good spring ball. I think that guy can do some things for us. I'm excited about the quarterback position. We've got a couple guys that have played some. And to be able to see those guys come out and do some things, and, again, improve from Week 1 to week 12.

I'm excited watching Kee Whetzel. This guy played and had done a great job here. He's got athleticism. Blake Brandel taking his game to another level. That guy has experience. He's a known guy that's going to play. But he can take his game to another level. I thought he had an awesome spring, so there are a bunch of guys.

**Q. The offensive line kind of got beaten up last year. Have you seen some confidence from them?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I thought they grew, yeah. I thought that was a mature group. There are a decent amount of guys that have played. I think the O-line coach has done a great job in terms of creating competition and moving guys around. Ultimately you're playing the best five guys.

But that group was pretty steady for us in the spring. One of our strengths on offense in the spring. So I think that group can do some things for us.

**Q. I don't know if you've been asked this, but are you going to do most of the play calling?**

JONATHAN SMITH: You know, I'm not. Brian will call plays. Like I said, being able to get Brian on board because he's done it for so long, we'll communicate. I'm going to be a little bit involved, but I feel like that whole offensive side with Brian, Jim Michalczyk, it's in good hands.

Those guys have done it a long time in this league, and they'll do it.

**Q. Will you miss that?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Hundred percent. I love that part, the strategy, the getting ready to call, all those things that come with it. But I felt like taking on this job, it's really important to let your coaches kind of coach.

And then I needed to learn what this head coaching piece is like and try to elevate my game from year one to year two to year three and that aspect.

**Q. You haven't coached a game yet, but what's**

**been the most surprising aspect of this job to you?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I think it is how quickly the day, the time goes. I mean, there is another thing that comes up that you need to handle or address and go. You get in in the morning and look at your watch and it's 4:30 already. The time just flies. That's been surprising to me.

I think I've enjoyed kind of just the relationships beyond just the coaching staff, because there are so many people that deal with our players -- academics, the weight room, the discipline, the compliance, the administration. So that's been fun for me to deal with those people on a day-to-day basis.

**Q. With the success of the baseball program, have you sat down with coach Pat Casey and picked his brain?**

JONATHAN SMITH: We've had a couple conversations, yeah. Shoot, I just talked to him two days ago. We go way back. Pat Casey was the baseball coach that I was playing. We played noon hoops together when I was a GA. So we do go way back. He's got some real value. He's lived the experience of being here and competing at a high level and what it looks like. So, yeah, I've gotten some things from him.

**Q. Still playing hoops?**

JONATHAN SMITH: No, I wish I was. But I got out there on the basketball court right now --

**Q. He'd probably play still?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, he'd probably get it. I'd go down on that floor three times and tear my ACL or something.

**Q. Is doing all this for the first time kind of a trip?**

JONATHAN SMITH: It's different. I mean, I don't know. I don't know about a trip or whatever. But this is a big stage, a big-time conference. This is a bunch of fun. It's an awesome opportunity.

I think about these kids talking right now, Kee and Blake, what an opportunity for these guys just in their growth. Not just as players, but just in life, the opportunity to have a mic in front of you and a camera going. So this is fun.

**Q. Outside of Chris and maybe Mike, is there anybody else you really tap for how to do this job for advice?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Paul Chryst. So Paul was the quarterback coach when I was at Oregon State. So I talked to him when I was down at Arizona. He helped hire the defensive coordinator, Tim Tibesar. I talked to him a little bit. I get a lot from him. I've just been

around some other coaches -- Dennis Erickson, Nick Holt at Purdue right now. He gave me my first job. I've had a lot of different influences.

**Q. Best piece of advice was?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I think Paul just talking about being you, being authentic to who you are. You don't need to change who you are. I was feeling that way already, but it just kind of solidified it. Be myself. I know the job is different, responsibility is different, but being authentic to who you are is the best way to go about it.

**Q. Jake Browning was saying he was impressed with how even keel you were over his tenure with you. Do you feel like that's how you're going to approach this job too?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, I go back. I think you just be who you are and that's how I've always tried to coach. So I try not to get too high, too low, trying to absorb all of it, the good and the bad. I think it's important for the players to feel some consistency, and that's been my approach.

**Q. Do you think -- I know fans like to look at coaches and they get all fired up and think that's coaching. Do you think you'll be doing any of that? Not that you're doing it, but do you get fired up on the side?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I think it's important to create urgency at times. Sometimes these guys need to feel you, for sure. But I think you have to do it in an authentic way. I'm not going to be whooping and hollering, but sometimes, yeah. We've already experienced some of that even in the spring of trying to create some urgency and making sure they know they've got some energy from their coaches.

**Q. How much did the quarterback position change from the recruiting element from when you were at Washington? How much has it evolved in the time that you were at Washington?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, I think it definitely is evolving. I think quarterbacks coming out of high school have had probably some other training from someone else other than their high school coach. So that's just heavily set in the recruiting process now.

You know, the four years there at U-Dub was definitely different from the first year or two to the last couple years because now you had some time to establish what it looks like and what we're doing on offense. A ton of people contributed to helping that. Petersen, Browning, you know, knowing the lay of the land, knowing exactly what you wanted to look for and the type of kid. So it changed.

**Q. How do you view using a quarterback on your roster to recruit? Because your job is to coach and get the kids to your campus. But how much does the quarterback on campus play with recruiting that kid? Like your current quarterback, for example, how much of a role would you want him to play?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Oh, I think it's important. If you've got a recruit coming to your campus to get face-to-face with the guy living the experience right now. So Jake was awesome in regards to the guys that would come through. He'd talk to them. I think it was beneficial for the recruits to find out what it's like to play quarterback, and we're doing the same thing at Oregon State.

**Q. You look at the Northwest, especially, and what is your overall take, I guess, on the recruiting or the talent in the Northwest?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, I think there's talent in the Northwest. I go back to the players we recruited the last two years at U-Dub that are from all over the Northwest. I go back to my experience at Oregon State when I was a player. I was playing next to a bunch of guys that were not only just from Oregon, but Washington, Montana. So there's players there.

Again, I go back to recruiting, is it the right fit of the place. So we feel like there is good talent in the Northwest, and they're a good fit for Oregon State.

**Q. Is there a pride element, being alum at Oregon State and now about to coach at your alma mater, is that part of your -- not sales pitch, per se, but is that part of the pride you take at being at Oregon State?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, there is definitely a piece of pride there. I think going back to in-state recruiting. There is pride for kids playing for the state. I think it's authentic in the message that I lived the experience and got a bunch of pride in the place. So it helps.

**Q. I know Coach Riley was helping you last year. Will he still be able to help you this year?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, he will. He'll be around, for sure. His role is tweaked a little bit because he's got another job and whatnot. But he'll still be on the fall and the day-to-day with us, and he helps in a lot of ways.

**Q. Coach, as one of my favorite plays in Pac-12 football history, what do you remember about your role in losing a shoe and throwing the touchdown pass to Chad Johnson?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Yeah, I remember it. We were on the right hash, rolled to my left, lost my shoe, but knew Chad was running a back side post, and the coverage, he had a chance to go over the top. So turned, heaved

it, and he ran right underneath it, yeah.

**Q. What will Mike be able to do with his team this fall? Just talk to you off the field?**

JONATHAN SMITH: He'll be in an off-field role, so he won't be coaching the players on the day-to-day, but a lot of that, whether it's the game plan aspect in identifying recruits, getting visits to people on campus, knowing this league, knowing high school coaches, all of that he'll contribute to.

**Q. What's been the reaction from high school coaches around the state to you?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I think there's some excitement. In fairness, I've been recruiting the state of Oregon for different schools for a long time, so I know a lot of these high school coaches. We've had a lot of them come through, watch practice, the communication.

I think there is some excitement. We're making an emphasis of trying to recruit their players, if they're good enough. I think that's helped too.

**Q. Timmy Hernandez, junior college defensive back, relatively unrecruited, comes out. He's had a big impact at Oregon State. What are you hoping to see from him this year, and what impact does he make on the team in general?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I think he makes a huge impact, not just by the plays he makes, but the type of guy he is, leadership role. I actually think his DB experience helps him at receiver a little bit. He's a great kid, going to graduate. He just does things the right way. So one of your players that are older and been through the process does it the right way, it's got a huge impact.

**Q. Mason Moran has seen a lot of movement -- quarterback, defensive back, quarterback, and now receiver. What can a guy like him do who hasn't really had a chance to have his footing yet? What can a guy with his athletic ability do to make sure he makes an impact?**

JONATHAN SMITH: He does. He has a diverse skill set. His impact, again, I go to even the culture of being a great teammate that way, of being flexible to try different positions, contribute in whatever way he can. I think that resonates with the whole team of being able to bounce to a position. He's trying to do things on special teams. He works really hard in the weight room. So all of that contributes.

**Q. Your weight program, I follow high school football and college football in Arizona, I'm seeing players go up there from Arizona and transform and become an absolute monster. What do you emphasize as far as the weight room goes that you're able to transform a lot of these kids to the**

**college level?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I think the weight room piece is so vitally important. It's not only about getting stronger, faster, injury prevention, but it's really about setting the culture and expectations. It starts down there. Those guys spend so much time with him. Mike McDonald, our strength coach, has been with him for six years. He's been to Boise and U-Dub with us.

So being on the same page from day one with him has been huge. He does a phenomenal job, him and his staff. I think you've got to make it enjoyable for those guys down there that they want to work and enjoy the work. Does a great job with that. Yeah, their bodies are changing, and we're getting stronger and faster.

**Q. You're going to go to Bend for a few days. Is that a bonding trip? Getting ready for an Ohio State road trip?**

JONATHAN SMITH: It's serving a few purposes. Number one, for sure, it's going to be a mock travel. So we'll treat it like we're going. We're going to Ohio State early, and going over there for a few days, so it has a little bit of that, for sure.

I think it's important to get around the state. We've got a bunch of Beaver fans, and getting to expose them to that. I think it's important to just change the environment, camp, same spot, 29 practices, to change the environment on these guys a little bit.

So all of those things are kind of the thought process.

**Q. Some people like to do that at the start of camp. Did you feel like doing it toward the end was more beneficial?**

JONATHAN SMITH: That piece for sure. Toward the end, a little mock Ohio State. Almost the week before we made the trip to Ohio State, that was the reason for moving back.

**Q. What is bigger, the Oregon State-Oregon match-up or the Washington-Washington State match-up?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I don't know. It's a little different dynamic. The two rivalries are a little bit -- but everyone wants to beat Oregon.

**Q. Are you feeling it a little bit more down in Oregon?**

JONATHAN SMITH: I don't know. Yeah, I mean, I don't know. I don't know.

**Q. How's the family adjusting?**

JONATHAN SMITH: That part has been good. Corvallis is a good town for that. Got into place. Wanted to get the kids down to start school before summer and all of that. We really liked it. Seattle was

good. We didn't live that far away. Elementary school was awesome. There were a lot of good things about Seattle. Corvallis is different. It fits us a little bit with the smaller town.

**Q. That's one of the unsung things they don't talk about in coaching, how hard it is?**

JONATHAN SMITH: Little bit, with the smaller town, yeah.