

# Pac-12 Conference Football

## Media Day

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Hollywood, California, USA

## Stanford Cardinal

## David Shaw

### Press Conference

DAVID SHAW: Morning, everyone. In case you don't know, my name is David Shaw, head football coach at Stanford University.

Great to see everybody live and in person. Very excited to bring the two student-athletes that we have with us. Thomas Booker, going to be one of the best defensive linemen in America, excited to see him explode on the scene nationally this year. Michael Wilson will be one of the better receivers we believe in the country this year. Great representatives for college football. Obviously for Stanford as well.

High-caliber athletes, high-caliber human beings, great students, and what college football is about.

Excited to see where we are right now. A lot of our guys will tell you too that they've noticed how we've been kind of picked to be the middle of the pack. That's not where our head is, it never is. Every single year we're trying to win the conference. I believe we have the talent to do so. We've had a lot of guys coming back, some guys coming back from injury, some guys coming back that we believe are better than they were a year ago.

Obviously we led the conference in putting guys in the NFL last year, five draft picks, five undrafted free agents. We intend to continue to do that. I think we've got an exciting football team. I think we have skill positions, very deep in a lot of our skill positions, running back, receiver, tight end in particular.

Offensive line-wise we've had a group of guys that have been playing football since their freshman year. This group has become juniors now. A couple young guys added in as well. I think where we want to be on the offensive line. Got a quarterback battle going on which will bear itself out. By the end of spring I feel great about both guys, their abilities to run our offense.

Feel really good about where we are on the defensive side,



I think we're bigger, more physical, more athletic than people really know. No one was able to come watch us play in spring either to see what we have as a group.

I think we have a really good football team. I do believe we'll be battling for the conference championship, then we'll see where we are after that.

Questions.

**Q. Covering UCLA, I've noticed Chip Kelly talked quite a bit about you, your relationship. Can you just tell me a little bit about how that started, what you think of Chip Kelly.**

DAVID SHAW: So Chip of course was the head coach at Oregon when I became the head coach here at Stanford. Had always been fascinated with his philosophy.

I don't think nationally Chip Kelly gets the credit he deserves for changing college football. Chip I think advanced college football by at least a decade for what he did at Oregon. You've seen other people have different offenses, but really following Chip's lead there. I think he changed college football. I've always respected him for that.

As I got to know him, because their offense looks so different than our offense. Once I got to know him I saw philosophically we were pretty identical. Great running game, physical running game. Play-action pass off of your running game. Attacking style of defense.

Even though (indiscernible) I love the fact that Chip is not a follower (indiscernible) that combination of being high intellect in the individual and also not mind straying from the pack and being a little bit different, that has always really appealed to me.

Yeah, he's one of the guys that I want to bounce things off of. We're talking about college football, we're talking about our conference. I love Chip's perspective.

**Q. As these first few weeks of NIL have played out, what kind of feedback or questions have you been**



**getting from players as they get offers? How do you think it's worked so far?**

DAVID SHAW: I'm really proud of our guys. As you can imagine, our guys choosing to go to Stanford says a lot about who they are. The way that we've waded into this NIL world, guys aren't diving in headfirst, they're being very conscious of anything that they do. They're asking a lot of questions. Not for us to tell them what to do, but for us to give them more information. That's the way I see our position in this, is to make sure our guys are informed, that they make the best decisions for them, both now and for their future.

There are a lot of these NIL deals that are not good deals. They're long-term deals that ask too much of our guys. There are agents out there that don't always have the best intentions. I think any deal that a student-athlete signs should allow them to grow beyond the deal.

So long-term deals are not wise. But I told our guys, too, the social media is their best advantage, controlling their social media. I say this all the time, not just quoting rap lyrics on your social media, right? Putting out there who you are, what you're about, what's important to you. Then you'll be able to attract the right kind of people that are looking for you to be a partner or a representative of what they're doing.

All the time I point to what Zach Ertz does on social media, Justin Reid, Harrison Phillips, Blake Martinez. We have so many Stanford guys out there. Doug Baldwin is so great on social media. So many of our guys really showing who they are out there and engaging with people on their own terms is as important as anything else these guys do in this space.

**Q. At a recent event it was quoted that Bryce Young is near seven figures in NIL deals. What is your gut reaction when you hear those kind of numbers?**

DAVID SHAW: My gut reaction is on multiple levels. First of all, Nick Saban is smarter than any 10 of us in this room combined. There's no way that was a throw-in. It's obvious to me Nick wanted to plant that and make sure people knew that. It's a great way to recruit people to come to you, which the guy hasn't started a college football game and he's already signed a whole bunch of deals to make money.

To me, I don't think that's what this whole thing is supposed to be about. I don't believe that is true market value. I think that's Alabama value. But that's not market value for an individual, which is what this is supposed to be about.

I'm not saying it's wrong. In my mind when I look at this, it is a combination of your personality, who you are, and what you've accomplished in order to create opportunities for yourself. That to me is kind of putting the cart before the horse. It's all legal, it's fine now.

Nick mentioning that at the Media Day is a great way to kick-start your recruiting, especially if you're recruiting another high-caliber quarterback, as we all know that they are.

It wasn't accidental. Many of us around college football kind of shrugged our shoulders and said, Is this really what we want to be doing? I wonder about the people who are engaging in high-value deals like that. I know a lot of business people. I wonder what their return is on that investment. That's a major investment. That's a high-dollar value investment. What are they getting back from that?

Over time that's not a wise thing to do business-wise, is to give a college athlete a whole bunch of money if you're not getting anything in return.

So as many people like kind of chuckled when I saw that, there will be very few people around the country that have those opportunities. I wonder, too, after this era right now, this year where these things happen, if people will continue to do that going forward. I still wonder what do you get back from giving a student-athlete a whole bunch of money. Does that help your business? If it does, great. If that's not a great business model for you, how is that sustainable?

That's part of what we all knew was going to happen. There are going to be a few of those stories over this year. My guess is there will be fewer of those stories in the following year. In particular, there will be more of those juniors and seniors that are established, that have a chance to go on and do something beyond college football. Those to me are the ones that will have those deals, not guys that haven't started a game yet.

**Q. I got to talk to some of your guys when they were up in Santa Barbara before the UCLA game. How drained you were after that game. With some distance on last season, was it worth it, playing, with everything you guys specifically went through?**

DAVID SHAW: 100%, 100%. As difficult as it was on a daily basis, the stress and strain that we put on the student-athletes, their families, my coaching staff, our football staff, operations, training staff and medical staff, strength and conditioning staff, all those people were



supposed to be in this for the student-athletes and the experience was awesome.

It was difficult, it was hard. But the experience was awesome. For our guys, part of it I'm sure was we finished on a four-game winning streak, we were able to make lemonade out of lemons throughout the year. But our young people grew that year. They fought difficult things, difficult circumstances, and they went out there and performed and they performed at a high level.

To go through a year like that and have zero positives, zero positives from our student-athletes the entire year, they did the right things, they comported themselves the right way, they handled every difficult circumstance that was thrown their way, including not being allowed to start training camp in our county. We had to go out of our county to start training camp. Then finishing the year three weeks away from our county again.

I think you talk to any of those guys, and our guys are still calling for a 30 for 30 done on Stanford football the 2020 season. But they all came out of it better. Resilience is one of the most important things that you can have as an individual, being able to bounce back from difficult circumstances. Our guys showed that resilience every single day.

**Q. I know in the past few years, especially since D.C. Derek Mason left, the defensive ratings of Stanford have been slipping to the point where you're near the bottom of the FBS. There's also been questions about the depth at multitude of positions on defense. Can you give us a quick outline of your plans for the defense going forward, whether you think these rankings are important.**

DAVID SHAW: I don't believe the rankings are important. Winning games and graduating student-athletes are the two biggest things for me, how I truly rate our program. We've had years where the defense was dominant; the offense was kind of the little brother as you may say. We've had years where the offense has been great and the defense hasn't done enough to win football games. That's where we were last year.

I believe this year will probably be one of our better defensive years in the last five to seven years. Start with the guy in the back there, Thomas Booker, will be one of the best defensive linemen in America. We have a couple of linebackers that have missed a lot of time the last couple of years, in particular our two inside linebackers, two inside linebackers, Ricky Miezan and Jacob Mangum-Farrar. Those guys I think are outstanding college football players. Nobody really knows who they are. They haven't played a

lot of football. The combination of those three guys I think is going to be huge.

I'm the son of a defensive coordinator. My dad always talks about the middle of your defense. If you can be good at inside linebacker and defensive line, interior defensive line, that's the great beginnings of a defense. I think we're really good there.

I think we'll have one of the top corners in America, Kyu Kelly. Missed some time last year. But this guy is long, fast, and explosive. Showed a lot as a true freshman. A little bit banged up last year. I think he's going to be one of the best in America this year.

I think we are deeper and faster than most people think that we are. I think we came out of spring in a good spot.

I don't worry about the rankings. I think we did underperform at times last year, in particular against the run. A lot of it was just purely assignment football. We had some young guys out there, inexperienced guys out there. I think Coach Anderson and our defensive staff have done a great job of dissecting not just what went wrong last year but what went right last year. The personnel we have right now, make sure those guys are put in a good position going forward.

**Q. Stanford doesn't host official visitors in the month of June. You guys changed that tune this year. Is that something that you maybe hope to do in years to come? How was the temperature on that experience?**

DAVID SHAW: I believe a couple things in particular. Whenever you're running an organization, number one is you have to have a philosophy, a philosophy that works for you individually and the place that you are leading.

Number two, I think you need to be adjustable.

Circumstances have changed dramatically in the last year and a half. COVID, first and foremost. For student-athletes, I'll say it, for student-athletes not legally being allowed to visit campuses over the time period was a big hamper to the recruiting process. So the fact that we were able to have an opportunity to have a lot of these guys come on campus in June. I'll be honest, I resisted initially hosting because we've had such a great way of doing our recruiting. If you ask anybody that we've recruited over the last decade, 90% of them will say the best thing we've done is having our official visits in December. It's been the best thing about our recruiting.

It was hard to give that up because we have an opportunity to bring the entire class in together. And as importantly, to

bring their families in together, to really feel like a group, really feel like a unit.

Our parent group is extremely strong. It's one of the best things about our entire program. It really starts there with those parents getting to know each other. It's not just about getting guys to come. We ask our student-athletes, our prospective student-athletes, to do more than anybody else in America. That official visit was like a reward.

But with COVID and really hearing and talking to student-athletes on Zoom of course for months, a high percentage of this '22 class, they were going to make their decisions at the end of June. They hadn't been able to see anyone. They wanted to see as many places as they can in June. A high percentage of them, like, I'm making my decision over the summer. So we couldn't wait. We didn't have a change for coaches to go out and see them, we didn't have a chance for those unofficial visits. This was going to be our shot so we had to do it.

Now combine that -- sorry for the long answer, but this is all the honest answer to your question -- so grateful to Stanford, the administration at Stanford University, our president, our provost, our professors, Bernard Muir, our athletic director, really pushing for early enrollment. Now that we have an opportunity to have early enrollees combined with these early decisions, now in order to come do a Stanford official visit, we're able to put out there, in order to come, we need you to be here academically, we need you to get your senior schedule set for Stanford, we need to get you started on the application.

Those are things without early enrollment I don't know if we would be able to do that and have guys still be able to come on visits. Now that that's an opportunity, now we've had a lot of really high-caliber athletes, many have committed to us, shown interest in us now, be able to come on campus, that sets us up to have a better process for having a fruitful official visit period in June, whereas before if we had official visits in June, it was going to be hard to have a mechanism to make sure these people were actually academically viable for our place.

Most college coaches around the country don't understand our process. Honestly, it's one of the big things they try to recruit against us. They think we fabricate all this stuff. I have no say in the application process. I have no say in the admissions process. Now for us to be able to put those bars up there, for guys to say, Okay, if I want to come to Stanford, have Stanford as an opportunity, have Stanford as early admit opportunity, I need to start that academic process, I need to start that application process early on.

Now we have to mechanism to make sure these guys are

on the right track. If we didn't do that, we'd have a bunch of guys from all over the country saying, Yeah, I'll come do an official visit. Then after the official visit, not taking the classes, not taking the tests we needed to, et cetera.

We now have a mechanism to make it a viable thing for us to have guys come on official visits in June and have them truly be on the academic track. We'll still have some guys that want to come on a visit, but they won't be where we need them to be academically setting their senior schedule and we won't allow them to come. Now we stop wasting our time and not waste their time, as well.

**Q. What has been your message to players about getting the vaccine? You personally, what do you feel the responsibility is of a head coach in that situation?**

DAVID SHAW: Well, I think throughout all of this COVID situation, from the very beginning, I think Stanford and our entire county, we've been a little bit more restrictive, but I think we've also been very straightforward in truly putting the health and safety of our student-athletes first.

I tell them a couple things. Number one, I'm not going to mandate that anybody do something they truly don't believe in. Mandate that they do something that is maybe not in their own best interest medically for themselves.

I think it's better and safer for all of us if everybody is vaccinated. As we all know, being vaccinated doesn't keep you from ever getting the virus; it keeps it from being as severe as it could be without.

It is about personal safety, but at the same time now being a member of the football team, one of the best things about being a member of a team is that it's not about you, it's about everybody else. So we have a process at Stanford by which you can appeal. We've had multiple guys appeal and get those appeals okayed.

But it's more than just not getting the vaccine. It's now understanding if you're not vaccinated, you have a responsibility to be here for your teammates. So how you live away from us, every decision still needs to be about the team.

If you're not vaccinated, okay, great, that's fine. That's what you and your family believe in, it's best for you. We love you to death. You're part of us, we're a family here. But now you have to live a life that keeps you available as a viable student-athlete for us.

There are going to be different rules for vaccinated and unvaccinated people. If we all are on the same page, then I believe we'll have a great result. I think our team is still



strong regardless of people doing different things because it's still about us being there and being available for duty when those games come around.

**Q. I know the new commissioner said they were going to have a policy in mid August in terms of games. What do you feel like is the fairest policy moving forward?**

DAVID SHAW: I'm open to all the possibilities. I think many of us are much more educated on the virus, and our behavior matters, vaccinated or unvaccinated.

There's now a responsibility I believe on all of us to make sure that we can field a team. The structures that we'll have as a university, as an athletic department, as a football program, need to be in such a way that help people stay safe. But there's going to be an individual responsibility as well that our guys have to understand.

More so than ever, if you are now living outside of what is wise, now you could potentially affect two people which affects eight people which affects now a bunch of people, and you can put yourself in position to really costing your team a game, we saw it happen in the College World Series, we saw a Yankees-Red Sox game get pushed, we saw multiple guys gearing up to be in the Olympics, men and women, that now are not in the Olympics. There are multiple golfers in the PGA TOUR that couldn't play in events.

COVID hasn't gone away. It's still about making great decisions, vaccinated or unvaccinated, with the idea of what's best for the team at the forefront.

**Q. A couple months ago you weren't too shy on your thoughts about playing Kansas State in North Texas, 9 a.m. Pacific time, 11 a.m. Central. What are your thoughts on that now, having that early kickoff?**

DAVID SHAW: I'm doubling down on the same philosophy, the same thought process. When these deals are made that they need to be in the best interest of both parties. It is not in the best interest of our conference to play out-of-conference games when we're going to play the game basically at 9:00 in the morning for our bodies, which is now getting these guys up at 6:00 in the morning, their body time, to play a game.

Whereas we're going to play an opponent who is going to get up at 8:00 their body time.

We had one of the world's foremost authorities on sleep in Dr. Dement who passed away this past year, who was instrumental in what we do and how we do it. One of the

principles he used to always say to me is, These are college kids. The majority of them are not going to sleep at 9:00. You can tell them to. You can try to make them. They're not going to sleep at 9:00.

So the earlier you get them up, with them habitually staying up later hours, you are hampering their academic performance, you're hampering their relationship, how they interact with each other, because lack of sleep is one of the biggest issues for all of us. It hampers everything that you do.

So now organizationally, that's the thing, I kind of went on a limb, thankfully a lot of the coaches in our conference applauded me for it, which was as a conference we need to be able to say, we want to play these great out-of-conference games, but we want to make sure they're played at a proper time for all of us.

I understand there are windows. I talked to a couple of the schedulers with FOX who reached out to me, said a couple things, which I appreciate. But for me in my position, what I care about is what's best for our student-athletes. Playing at 9:00 in the morning for us is not what's best for our student-athletes. Playing at 8:30, 9:00 at night, getting home at 3:00 in the morning is not what's best for our student-athletes.

As we go forward, new TV deal coming around, a lot of conversations with a lot of big-time out-of-conference games over the next couple years, I think that needs to come into play to make sure that we get the best opportunity for our student-athletes to go out there and perform at a time in which their bodies can perform at a high level.

**Q. The sport is moving more towards two down lines defensively. Your division, including yourselves, still employ a lot of 12, 13, occasionally 22. It's kind of the opposite of what the sport is doing. How do you prepare where you have a division that does one thing and a sport that is shifting very much the other way?**

DAVID SHAW: I'm a firm believer that if you're good at what you do, then you make people adjust. I think we finished the last decade with three conference championships, top two in wins, and the winning record against the entire conference.

So trends can change, but there's certain things that don't. One thing Chip and I agree 100% on, which is time of possession doesn't matter, but what does matter is possessions. So if we can have time of possession on our side, and we can score touchdowns in the red zone, the combination of those two things, we now put the

disadvantage on some of these high-caliber, fast-paced spread offenses that count on two things: number of plays and number of possessions.

It's purely math. If we can deplete their number of plays and possessions, so now they're playing less plays than they're used to playing, we can hopefully keep their score down all the while playing with a physical mentality and attitude that we have. We still throw the ball, spread the ball around quite a bit. We now put ourselves in position at the end of the game to be ahead.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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