

Stanford University Football

Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

David Shaw

Bernard Muir

Media Conference



BERNARD MUIR: We got done so late on Saturday night, and by the time -- the entire team was hugging Coach Shaw -- by the time we did our media conference, not many people were up. So we wanted to take this opportunity to, one, say thank you to David for all that he's accomplished here at Stanford, certainly the 16 years of coaching here.

He's a loyal Stanford alum. And it's certainly hard to believe that, for myself, after 11 years being here at Stanford, not to be able to work side by side with him will certainly be something I'll miss.

But I appreciate people being on this teleconference because we really owe a great deal of gratitude to David for what he has done for Stanford and what he's done for the young men that I had a chance to actually visit with yesterday. And to a person, just really credit Coach Shaw for bringing them here to Stanford to get their degree, to play good football. And certainly it will be a loss for us.

But David, on behalf of our administrative team, the Stanford community, just say thank you for your contributions here.

DAVID SHAW: Thank you, Bernard, for your words and your partnership through this time. And couldn't have had a better boss. We worked extremely well together. Never said no to me. A lot of times it was "not right now," but I also knew asking for the right things and pushing this program in the right direction we were always on the same page. And couldn't have been, couldn't be more appreciative.

I have some thank yous, of course. First and foremost, my wife, Kori; our three children who are here, Keegan, Carter and Gavin; my parents for introducing me to this place at a very young age. I think I was 3 when my dad came to coach here.

I talk about this with members of my family and other

people -- I'm 50 right now but I've been affiliated with Stanford University for 25 of my 50 years. As a coach's kid, five years as a student-athlete, and then the last 16 as an assistant coach and head coach.

And my sister, Tawnya, who is a teacher, take a second to thank all the teachers out there and all the ways that you influence young people.

My brother, Eric, and his family, take the time to say thank you. And to all the cancer survivors out there, as my brother is one, and a bless you to all those out there fighting cancer.

And not just to Bernard Muir but the entire administration here for all the support, in particular over the last year with all the changes in college sports and the dedication for our administration towards adjusting to this new world.

We talked recently about transfers, working through the transfer portal. We made the change not too long ago about bringing in early enrollees. It's been a huge -- made a huge impact on the program. I'm grateful to that.

Couple of obvious thank yous also. The Arrillaga family for all they've done for Stanford University and the personal relationships I had with Mr. A, God rest his soul, John Jr., Gioia and their families. So many positive things, so many positive memories and great people.

The Bill Walsh Society, which has done so much for our program been and been so close to me, so close to Bernard, such great support. The Buck/Cardinal Club. Just so many great people that have supported this program.

Brad Freeman, our names have been linked together since day one. Got a great relationship. So appreciative to be the Bradford M. Freeman Director of Football for these 12 years.

Rick Shaw, Kiyoe Hashimoto, through all the discussions about who is worthy of the Stanford offer. And we took it very seriously. They gave us great guidance on finding the right student-athletes. And over 90 percent graduation

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says a lot about picking the right people and indoctrinating them into this program, into this university. Never lowered the standards. Just refined our search. And that's been very, very important.

Bob Bowlsby, who hired me, so grateful to him and entrusting this program to me. And remaining friends since then. And very proud to know Bob and Candi.

And I just have to say all the coaches here. I said it the other night. I have to say it again. This Stanford coaching fraternity, it's a living, breathing hall of fame of coaches -- conference championships, national championships, coaching Olympians, coaching best in the world. Just to be in this group raises your expectations day after day.

And the collaboration that we've had in recruiting and talking about moving forward and how this place can be better and be great. The friendships and relationships with these other coaches is amazing and continues to be amazing.

I have an appreciation for Jim Harbaugh and the original staff that we came in in 2007. And a lot of those principles stayed true through the original time here. And that original staff was such a great thing to be part of. And we started something that really, really lasted and led to our success during my time as a head coach.

Everyone in operations, everyone in recruiting, so many hours, their families, just like thanking my family, all the families that supported this program through our ridiculous hours, through our crisscrossing the nation to find those great Stanford student-athletes, and the dedication that they have toward us and the time that we tried to make sure that we -- it's never enough -- but the time we tried to make sure we had with our families, our Tuesday family dinners were always special to see the kids running around at the end of practice. Truly made this a family environment.

All the players, heard from hundreds in the last couple of days. Couldn't have more gratitude towards the effort and determination, but mostly the trust that they put in me and my staff to push them and to guide them both in football matters and outside of football.

The friendships and relationships that are forged through tough times and good times continue to last. And I am grateful to everyone who put on a helmet and played for me and this program.

The faculty and staff here helped us in recruiting and all they had to do was be themselves. They're the best in the world. And they know it. And they'll tell you about it. And

they're doing amazing things here.

And it's a big part of the attraction for people to come here and the most difficult year we had in recruiting, of course, was during COVID because we couldn't have people come. And when people come and can visit with the coaches, but more importantly visit with the people that are already on campus, our student-athletes and our faculty, that's what makes this place special, the people that are here.

And so grateful to all the help and just our faculty being who they are, which as I said are the best in the world.

I was asked the other night if I could put my tenure here in one word. And I couldn't do it. It took me a while. And the one word I found is maybe a little corny, but it's "magical." It's magical.

I think about staying on that Pac-12 Championship stage three times and holding up that unnecessarily heavy trophy. It's like a dream holding up that Rose Bowl trophy two times, standing on the stage with my family. It was like a dream.

Watching some of these guys be drafted in the NFL and have great careers, it's magical. Those that didn't go to the NFL, watching them going to different grad schools and medical school and law school and start companies. It's magical. It's almost like it wasn't real.

And most importantly, we changed a lot of lives. Stanford changed my life. And our program changed a lot of lives for the better. And we took a lot of people in and turned them out into society as men. And very proud of that.

So with that, anybody I missed, I thank you and I'm grateful. Notice I did not use the word "retirement." I've not said the word "retirement." As I said, this is time for me to step away, a time for Stanford to find that next person to lead.

I said it the other day, this program -- I don't like to say myself -- this program, four-time coach of the year has never happened again, winningest program in school history. I hope the next person beats it. I really do.

I know Bernard's going to find the right person. We have a lot of great young people here. A lot of recruits I know are waiting to see what's going to happen. But as we said this place is special. This place is magical. And can't wait for Stanford to be on top again.

Q. Bernard, how important is it to the university to have a football program that is competing for

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conference titles on the national stage? And what changes do you think as an athletic department and university you think you guys need to make to get back to that level?

BERNARD MUIR: Great question. I'll tell you, across all 36 of our sports, we're trying to compete at the highest level. That's what we tell our student-athletes or prospective student-athletes when they come on a football weekend and visit with the faculty, like David just mentioned.

We're telling them all including football we want to compete at the highest level. We want to get back to competing for Pac-12 championships. We want to allow coach and student-athletes to hoist that heavy trophy that David just talked about. And the university is committed.

I'll tell you the last couple of years as David and I tried to navigate this landscape, which has changed so dramatically, it's been difficult. And we're working through NIL issues and trying to figure out how/where Stanford fits in that realm and how we can better support our student-athletes.

We're primarily doing it through education at this point, but we're also monitoring what's going on around the country.

Certainly transfer portal, David mentioned that, we're having conversations with admissions and other administrators on campus, seeing if we can find the right student-athletes that may have gone someplace else, made a different decision coming out of high school, but now, I would say, see the light and understand the value of a Stanford education.

And if they meet the qualifications in order to get in, I think there's a window. We can't build a roster full of transfers, but certainly we can at least hopefully dip our toe in the water there and see if there's the right individuals that can join this program.

But all in all, I say, in light of everything that's circulating in college sport, there's a way for Stanford to be successful because it's Stanford. And I think -- I feel even better about that after visiting with our student-athletes, knowing that their hunger, their drive, it's a credit to David for finding these young people that could join us, that want to wear the uniform and are proud to wear the Stanford helmet and represent us in competition.

And so to answer your question in a nutshell, Stanford can be successful in football on the national stage and has done it before and will do it again.

Q. Coach, obviously you have nothing but love for this program. Dedicated 25 years of your life to it. Why do you believe, in your opinion, this is the right move to step down for the betterment of the program?

DAVID SHAW: I would just say I think it's the right time for all of us -- right time for me and my family, right time for the program. With all the changes that are going through right now, I think it's a great opportunity for the next coach to come in and seize this opportunity.

I've said it to the team. I believe it wholeheartedly. I said it at the press conference last night and I'll say it again, this team's not that far away. The way that we've recruited, you go back and look at the recruiting. We had a lot of injuries this year. Gosh, if any of our top three running backs were healthy I think we're getting ready for a bowl game right now. I truly believe that.

If you look at the people on the team and you add the five right people, if we're able to get to that number through the portal, you look at what Patrick Fields did for this football team, as a guy who stepped on this field ready to play, played multiple positions, brought an energy and a life. That was just one.

Add a few more to that, certain positions, and change the fortune of your football team. So, I think that's exciting.

And I think that this next group is going to have that opportunity to really take where we are now and build a winning program.

Q. I'm curious, obviously you had extraordinary success in your first seasons as a head coach. What in your mind changed the last few seasons? And looking back sort of in retrospect, is there anything you would have done differently to kind of maintain what you achieved those first seasons?

DAVID SHAW: I don't look back. Everything that was helpful from those times, we move forward and use that going forward. So I'm not going to look back at things. And "could have, should have," those things don't help.

So I'm proud of our program. I'm proud of the fight that these teams have given us. You look at all the injuries we had -- going into Notre Dame and winning a game at Notre Dame. Going into Utah and taking the lead with all the guys that had been injured and fought. There's never one time you could say this team quit.

So I'm proud of the things that we did. Some games you win. Some games you don't. Some games the ball bounces your way. Sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes a

team gets healthy right before they play you and sometimes you get injured right before you play them.

For me, I look at this as an entirety and not first part versus second part. I'm proud of everything we did. I'm proud of this staff. I'm proud of every single student-athlete that stepped on the field for us.

Q. David, I might have missed this at the start. But do you have any plans, immediate plans, for the next year or two years? And then over the last decade I've heard you talk a lot about Bill Walsh who famously was the Stanford coach, then wasn't the Stanford coach and then was again at a different period of time. Could you envision a future where you follow a similar path there down the line?

DAVID SHAW: That's a complicated question. I don't have long-range plans right now. I just know, in my heart, this is the right decision at the right time.

I will see what the future brings. I don't anticipate coming back and being the head coach again. I mean, don't forget, that was separated by three NFL championships, too, for Bill Walsh. But, no, that's not on my mind right now. My mind is around my family and spending time with my family. We have transition in our family right now which is great and exciting.

And then we'll see what happens with me over time. I know I'll field some calls. But I'm not ready to jump into anything right now. I'm going to take my time. And when the right thing presents itself, both whether it's near future or down the road, I'll know.

We'll pray about it and think about it and make the right decision at the right time. But for right now, proud to be a Stanford fan. That's my big occupation right now, outside of time with my family.

Q. Coach, I've always felt -- we've said it many times -- that you're the conscious of college football. What advice would you give to coaches now that can become that as you step away from this role?

DAVID SHAW: Great question. And I've given this advice to a lot of young coaches over the last few years, which is, stay pure to the profession. The things around it are going to change. And I know it's one thing right now and a year from now it might be different. The transfer portal is one thing right now. It might be different.

But as long as you remain a teacher or mentor for football and life, you will be fulfilled as a coach. You pick the right people and do the right things, you'll win. If you don't and

you don't win, as long as you've done things the right way, you'll have a scene like I had in the locker room last night with a lot of young people that are better than when you found them.

So be a teacher, be a mentor, be a motivator, be a guider, and you'll be doing the profession a service.

Q. Coach, you said earlier that if you had to describe it in one word it was "magical." Could you pinpoint any like specific moment of which that magic of being a Stanford coach in your career shone through, what would it be within your tenure?

DAVID SHAW: We don't have enough time. From ridiculous victories, triple overtime against USC, Rose Bowl championships, record-setters and Christian McCaffrey and Bryce Love, Richard Sherman and all that he did, Doug Baldwin, Solomon Thomas, Chase Thomas, Trent Murphy -- like, I can't name all the plays and all the times and all the moments. There's just too many.

And selfishly just being the Stanford coach, meeting a lot of people who are just around this place. This place attracts high-level people. Gosh, actors and captains of industry. Tiger Woods, best golfer ever. Just met so many people being in this job because who Stanford attracts.

On a day-to-day basis, I don't know how many people I pass that are the best in the world at what they do, from Tara VanDerveer to Katie Ledecky to our women's tennis program and just knowing that there are superstars everywhere you go on campus.

And I chuckle sometimes when someone says they look up to me. I'm, like, you look up to me? You see who else is here?

And so just being in this area, being on this campus and not feeling anything but desire to do it the right way and do it well with the right people because that's what happens in this place.

So some of the magical things are obvious. They're on national TV for everybody to see. And some of the magical things are side conversations with the people that are on this campus -- not to mention I met two presidents on this campus. You attract the best and the brightest here.

Q. Bernard, now the search is on. What sort of criterion are you looking for? Is there a timetable or anything like that that you're looking at as far as getting the new coach in?

BERNARD MUIR: Thank you for that question. I would tell

you, yes, the search is on. It was on -- I got back at 2 o'clock after the game, and by 4 o'clock I was getting a call from a search firm, which indicated to me, we've got to get going.

I have a group of Stanford folks who are forming a committee. I won't go into the detail of who's on that committee. But I will continue to visit with them, ask for guidance and resource and for their collective, their mindset, their mind share, if you will.

And from there, we're going to go out and try to get the very best person to lead our young people to get back to what David has established and many before him. And we're going to do it -- to set a timeframe, we're trying to move quickly.

As I told our student-athletes last night, we want to be very deliberate in the Stanford fashion and find the right person. We'll scour the country and get as quickly as we can a person on board.

And we know we have recruiting windows here to solidify the next class. The power of Stanford, we've got a couple of commits yesterday and we don't have a coach, but they understand the value of a Stanford education. So I'm excited to find that person.

There's been a lot of interest already expressed to us. But we have to go through our due diligence and bring that person on board as quickly as possible.

Q. Bernard, given the unique challenges of Stanford relative to other Power Five jobs, how important is it for your next coach to have Power Five head-coaching experience and/or experience at an academic, elite academic school like Stanford?

BERNARD MUIR: Great question. I would tell you that the main thing is just the proper fit. To say that they have to have Power Five experience or have to be from a West Coast presence, the main thing -- that to me is not necessary. It's just finding the person that values what Stanford offers, values the people that David just mentioned that you're surrounded by every day and how to use that to your advantage to bring in the best and brightest and compete.

And so there's not a set list of criteria other than that we want to have someone that values the balance between athletics and academics, which is really important at this place. Do it with integrity, which is what David did for 12 years here as a head coach.

And we want to grow and allow our program to continue to

thrive and compete at a national level. And so that's what we're looking for. And I do believe, based on the interest thus far, we're going to be able to find that.

Q. Coach, want to get your thoughts on the early portion of your time as a Stanford coach, being an offensive coordinator under Harbaugh during those years, how much did those years help shape you become the head coach you became and just prepared you to have the run that you did?

DAVID SHAW: I would say that staff was a lot of fun to be around. Worked really hard. We had to change the mentality of the program. And Jim did a great job from that from day one.

But that entire staff, we found a lot of 2- and 3-star players that had the drive and the energy. We didn't get a lot of 4 and 5 stars that first year. But we found -- and one of the things we said then that we continue to say now, top of the criteria is toughness, tough enough to go into those classes and get A's and B's, tough enough to go out on the field and play a physical football game.

Those years were formative for me, as my entire time as a coach before I took over. I learned from everybody that I was around. I got great advice from my dad early on. And no matter who you're around, learn from them.

Coach Harbaugh and I have very, very different personalities. We have very, very different approaches. But I gleaned as much as I could from him as well as from the rest of the guys on the staff.

And when Bob Bowlsby shook my hand and gave me the job, I was ready because of those experiences, because I knew the team and because all the time I had spent in the NFL and other places I had been. So it was really just, up until I took this job, I took every experience and put it into practice.

Q. Coach, what is something about the Stanford head-coaching job that others might not know about that you kind of learned throughout your time here?

DAVID SHAW: It's something that I knew but it's different to experience it. And part of Bernard going through this search is it's one thing to coach the sport. It's another thing to lead a team. It's another thing to lead leaders.

You have to know how to lead leaders. You have to know how to develop leadership.

Talking to a couple guys on staff this morning, case in point, Solomon Thomas had every marker of being a great

leader, and as he stepped on this campus as a freshman was not quite ready to lead. It was about timing and putting him in certain positions, both -- as our strength staff did and our coaches did. And then once he was in that position and ready to be a leader on the team, then you give him the mantle and let him go.

So many examples like that. Just recognizing that you're not just a football coach. You're a teacher, leader, mentor. But you're developing leaders, and you're going to have a locker room full of people who will lead on the football team and lead in whatever they do.

Leading leaders is different than just leading non-leaders. I think every coach on this campus recognizes you've got a special group.

And young leaders still need leadership. They need guidance. They need direction. And to be in that position for these 12 years was amazing.

Q. Curious about your conversations with your family as you worked through this decision, whether Kori and your kids and I'm sure you spoke with your dad. What was their reaction or advice as you kind of worked through this?

DAVID SHAW: I'll keep some of that private. But in general, it was working through the feelings and emotions. And we've had such great experiences here, such great relationships here, such great memories here, such stability.

And everything is done here at a very high level of integrity and such great feelings that it's not easy to have this transition. But at the same time recognizing that it's been a while and it's time for this.

So a lot of those conversations were about how to do this, when to do this. And the general feeling with our family right now is, all right, this has been great, and we'll see what's next.

Q. It's one thing to make the decision and to publicly announce it and have it feel even more real. What have the last, whatever, 24, 35 hours been like?

DAVID SHAW: Peaceful. Peaceful. As I said, when you pray about something, you think about something, and I am not a snap-decision person. Never have been. Drives my wife crazy sometimes.

But when you know it's right, and every time I've given our student-athletes or young coaches advice, when you get to that point where you're looking at the different doors that

you could walk through and you find the right door and your shoulders drop. And you go, oh.

And that's the way I feel right now. I feel like this is the right decision. So I feel at peace.

Q. A lot of closure here. But could you share what is going on in the interim and how important this time period is in terms of keeping the recruiting class together?

BERNARD MUIR: I will tell you that we're working feverishly with our staff. The assistant coaches that remain still are trying to get the best and brightest to come to Stanford. Like I said earlier, we already had a couple of commits yesterday.

I know the coaches, when they can, they'll go back on the road. And we're working with the team that David assembled, to his credit, to make sure we secure a class and at the same time we conduct a search for the next leader of this program.

Q. Bernard, there's like an old adage saying you don't want to be the guy after the guy. So in terms of finding the proper replacement for coach David Shaw, what is your process and what is kind of the pitch to all the candidates out there that are interested?

BERNARD MUIR: I think the pitch is just Stanford. As David talked about and elaborated on, what makes this place special. Yes, there's pressure trying to fill, or you can't really fill David's shoes, but you have this opportunity to be the Stanford football coach, the head coach of this program, and to be among, as David mentioned, the leaders to lead student-athletes who are going to be leaders in the world. No question about that. But also who you're surrounded by in terms of other coaches and the programs here that are trying to be successful.

We have the moniker "home of champions" for a reason, and I think people will be attracted to be a part of that. And we have to support them. We understand that, as we talked about, navigating this landscape can be challenging, but it's a heck of an opportunity for someone.

I'm excited to do my own form of recruiting, if you will. Having the support that I do from the campus community, I think we have a chance to do something great and build on what David has already established here.

DAVID SHAW: I'll tag on the back of that, because I got that same question 12 years ago. Because I was following the guy. But I think the bottom line is you don't follow the next person.

I said it at the time, too, my dad told me a long time ago, you don't ever walk in anybody else's shoes. So finding the right person with this group, I'm hopeful the next person will be here for a long time, win more games than we won and put this program back on top.

Q. Mr. Muir, what accommodations is Stanford going to be making to the new landscape in college football, specifically the transfer portal and the NIL?

BERNARD MUIR: As I said earlier, I think we are going to continue to evaluate NIL and find appropriate balance as to how we can provide the education for our student-athletes to thrive in that space. We have student-athletes already on this campus that are doing quite well. It will be rooted in education, whatever we do. We know others are more aggressive in that space right now, and we just have to find what is right for Stanford. We have a group on campus of administrators who are looking at this, and faculty. And again striking the appropriate balance is important.

As it relates to the transfer portal, I think we can dabble in it. We're not going to build an entire roster from transfers. That's not Stanford. But I'm hopeful, in the conversations I've had with my provost and with our dean of admission, that we can look in the transfer portal provided major caveat that they can do the work academically and be successful here.

Q. Bernard, just as you kind of go about evaluating candidates, you already touched on it. But how important is the group of Stanford alumni former players, that kind of pool going to have in terms of you making this decision?

BERNARD MUIR: That's the power of this place. To be able to pick up the phone and talk to a number of people who have worn the uniform, who are in the business of football at the college and pro level. Those conversations have been had in the last couple of days and will continue to occur.

And I just feel so blessed that I'm able to have this network of people that know this sport really well, the intimate nature of trying to find the right coach and know how important it is, that they understand Stanford fully and understand what they're getting into.

So I'm going to use that guidance. At some point, I haven't done that yet, but I'm going to talk to our honored alum here and tap into his resource as to what I should be looking for as well.

So I'm going to be talking to a number of people, relying

on, and then ultimately making a decision that is in the best interests of our program and the young men that are going to be wearing that uniform and represent Stanford so well.

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