

# Stanford University Men's Basketball Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

**Kyle Smith**

**Bernard Muir**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us today. We will start with opening remarks from our Jaquish & Kenninger Director of Athletics, Bernard Muir, who will then introduce our new Anne and Tony Joseph Director of Men's Basketball, Kyle Smith. Then we'll open it up for questions.

BERNARD MUIR: Thank you, everyone, for coming. It's certainly an exciting day for Stanford men's basketball. Kyle, we're thrilled to welcome you here, and we are getting underway ready to start a new era here. I also want to say welcome to Katie and to Rocco. Bo and Luke are not with us today, but we look forward to having them down. Rocco is already repping the Stanford gear, which I love. It's just a thrill to have your family here, and I hope you'll feel that way as you get acclimated. I also say welcome back to the Bay Area. It's great to have you.

The last week or so here, we've been scouring the country to try to find the right coach, and we quickly found it. The one thing I will say before I turn it over to you, Kyle, is just the number of people in the basketball community that just rave about you and rave about your teaching and passion, it's pretty evident.

Then the other thing I would say is we did our homework. We talked to a number of folks. I think a couple stops ago, we talked to some people in the administration at Columbia, and they said from day one you always mentioned that your dream job was Stanford. It was a smart choice. I'm glad that we finally have fulfilled your dream and you're coming home.

With that, I have a jersey to present to you and then I'll have you do opening remarks.

KYLE SMITH: Now, Bernard knows I can ramble, so if he starts going, Katie, give me the hook, it's time to wrap this thing up.

So it's great. It's wonderful to be here. It might sound

corny and trite because it's my fourth job, but it's actually beyond a dream job. Never thought that, being a Division III player, coach, whatever, to have this opportunity is really incredible, and I think it will resonate when I discuss it. I'm really thrilled.

Two apologies in advantage. I'll try not to cry, and my wife is going to work on that, and I'll try not to be a comedian that's working the Catskills. I'll try not to come off that way, but there's a possibility of both.

First, I've got to thank my family. Bernard already touched on it. Everyone will quickly understand my better three-quarters. Some already do. My wife, who really is the rock star in this family, talented. She was an SWA at 29, and she's a more incredible wife and mom, and she's crying so she's ruining the whole deal.

Then Bernard mentioned my family. Rocco, who's 15, and we're looking for the right basketball program. He's coming on. Ninth grader, going to be a tenth grader. Bo and Luke couldn't make it today. Luke had baseball, and Bo, everyone will get to meet soon enough.

Also I've got to give this guy a shout-out and I don't think people usually do this in their thing, but pretty unique, my agent Oliver Winterbone, who actually sounds like a third-generation waspy attorney, so we're going to work on that. We're going to call him "Bones" or "Big O."

But he took on a client that had very specific needs, and my intention was to make the big time where I was at. I needed someone that makes it where I'm living because where we lived was great.

I live by faith and family are the two most important things, and I said, hey, I don't care what interest there is out there. If we can make a better situation for our family here at Washington State or wherever, that's the most important thing to me.

That's not a great hand to play when you're an agent. Like my client really wants to stay where -- will you talk to him. Again, this had to be a unique opportunity, and this one is beyond unique because not only for the basketball piece



but also for my family.

In the process, and it went quick, I described it -- we only had like one conversation, and I think it was like two teenagers trying to figure out a prom date. It was kind of like, I think he likes me. He likes me. He kind of had me at hello. He didn't know that he had me at hello, but I was like, I'll let him go.

He put us in touch with Antonio Hardan at the Stanford Autism Center. Like I said, hard not to cry, but to have that opportunity for our family, my son to have maybe more resources, just honored and thankful. You'll all get to know Bo soon enough.

Also we'll have another part of our family to mention, and that is a very special caregiver - she's going to move down here - in Emily Hoot. No chance of not crying. You guys will know. It's a joyous cry, I promise you.

I want to thank Bernard. What a class act and great -- really was very I want to say "Stanfordy" in the whole process. He was very procedural.

He gave me -- because like I said, my agent, I said, look, I'm not going to talk to you until our season is done; I don't care what's going on. I think we talked after last game finally. I said -- I had to say, are we in the tournament? I said, I would hate myself if I ever talked to you or even approached it if we did, and I think we were safely in according to my wife, which is my -- he was very respectful of what we were trying to do as a team.

He said, you go in the tournament, do what you have to do, and we'll support you, we'll be here when you're done, and that means a lot because I couldn't go in that locker room, again, back to my agent, like I said, we're not signing anything, we're not doing anything, but really felt comfortable. I really came to the conclusion, I told my agent, I said, what if we win this whole thing. He said, I don't know if there's much to be done at Washington State; it's time to go to Stanford either way. That made everything easier. It was like, hey, let's go for it, and we did really well.

He doesn't seem like a cutthroat negotiator because like I said, he had me at hello, but I was like -- I was just there very stoically, and then all of a sudden he's like, do you like golf? I was like, I like golf, whatever, and I'm just thinking, what's he got going. He goes, you know, Condoleezza is a member at Augusta. I said, really? I said, well, it's always been my dad's -- it's always been my dad and I's dream to play Augusta, and he goes, done. I said, done-done? He said, done. I said, great.

Well, now I'm like, oh, I've got this guy.

I said, you know, my pastime, one of my hobbies, I'm a writer. I've been floating a couple scripts. I've got a documentary I'm working on. I said, do you know Issa Rae. He said, yeah. I said, I'll take a meeting with her, too. He he's got both of them working for me.

But no, someone prepped me -- I want to be clear on this. Someone prepped me for this press conference and said don't make up stuff. I did. I did. Those two conversations I did. But also I'm not afraid to plant the seed. I'm not afraid to plant the seed what the desires are so they've got it.

But he's been great, and I think we're going to have a wonderful connection. There's so much overlap with his experience growing up in Gainesville, I grew up in Houston, him then going to an Ivy League in New England and stuff like that and just the travels around the midwest, so citizens of the U.S. for sure anyway, and a lot of experiences I'm excited about.

Carter, I want to give him a little shout-out. He's kind of my sherpa through this process, and thank you in advance from -- you're going to be hearing from me a lot on this transition. Actually when I spoke, I was a little shocked, they said Condoleezza Rice is going to be calling you at 2:00 and she was very prompt and it was an awesome conversation. I don't think they told her that I hadn't signed anything yet, but she was like, welcome. I'm like, closed. That's all I needed from her.

Those are the thank yous, and I couldn't be more happy there.

I just want to share a little bit about my why. Why do I coach. I think it's always important when I'm recruiting or might as well tell you guys now a little bit. Had unbelievable parental support. I want to thank my parents, my dad, who has been a big believer in his son, a big part of my competitive drive and trying to -- he was a pretty successful guy, and trying to live up to that with integrity. Then my mom and my stepdad, Susan and Arthur Rosenblum, and my mom who is a kindergarten teacher and still speaks to me as such, and never a negative word, win or lose, and she's the emotional support and maybe more of my coaching acumen might come from her because she understands patience, and that's really key when you're working with people.

So that's kind of -- I've got a good basis to fall back on. My stepdad Art is awesome. Just leave it at that.

But I've had some influences going back to ninth grade. I

kind of figured out this is what I wanted to do was either sell computers like my dad, or my high school coach Rick Shirley, and I don't know why, but I just really gravitated to him at an important time in had I life, and I still go by this in every job, I've talked about everything I need to know I learned in high school, and when things are going hard, I just go back to this, and this guy is a Texas Association of Basketball Coaches. He's won 800 games. He's the president of that. He's just been a mentor. He's a big cheerleader, and a lot of what I've learned, the analytics piece and all that, but more importantly he's just a great human being.

One, my way of giving back to people has been kind of what instilled in me, and then moved on into my professional life.

I think Randy Bennett, who was the head coach of St. Mary's, pretty prominent guy in the Bay Area, he's the first guy that really helped me get a job and really believed in me when I was begging just to volunteer anywhere, and I really -- I locked it down, I told Bernard, for \$800 that year for being the graduate manager of University of San Diego.

A lot of the things like Rick Shirley being my high school coach, and his dad was a high school and junior college coach, so that's kind of where -- we took over a situation and we just always doubled down on coaching, doubled down on character development, that sort of thing. Always been part of that deal.

Then there's been a lot of people along the way, and like I said, but my professional life, really kind of interesting how the world works and how your life -- I'm at a point in my life where there's certain things that influence you. You don't know how much. But there's two people I want to mention in a big way, and that's when I got my first head job at Columbia, and this guy is a pretty prominent guy. He said -- this will sound like never let the bastards get to you. His name is Bill Campbell, and he was, as people know in here, he was the football coach at Columbia before he took a little marketing job here in the Silicon Valley with Apple, and he turned it into sitting on a few boards and into a Google etc., and he became Coaches of the CEOs.

But he was so much more than that. He was just a dude from Homestead, PA, that played football and coached football and just happened to be really gracious with his time and resources.

He just told me a couple things. He said, if you ever need anything, call me. I did only once or twice. I knew I was smart enough -- it was, it was like, what do you need, and it was done. He kind of caught me -- like I talked about my why. I think he personified it. He took so much joy in

helping others and seeing them succeed, whether it's for Sacred Heart or whatever. His powder puff football team was a big deal to him. People that know him or know of him, it's amazing, it's been eight years since he passed away, but he made a huge impact on me.

Another thing, at Columbia he would always host a thing, The Old Pro. I've heard it's coming back. I'm all in on that.

He always finished the night kind of the same way, with a pint in front of him, and it would be about 2:00 a.m. and he'd be telling me, look, there's two things in life, the assets you have, your time and your treasure, and how are you going to spend those.

For him, he had it mapped out. He's like, my family, my business relationships, my community, and my alma mater, and he lived by those.

To be here, and this I know would make him really proud to be associated here, really thankful. Like I said, it's beyond a dream, and I know he's probably up there looking down and got a beer in his hand.

Then when I got to USF, when you talk about my why, there's a guy that kind of -- I never worked with him, but I really respect him. He's the guy from Peninsula who coached at Kenyatta Community College for many years, Mike la Garza, Positive Coaches Alliance, who I'm sure there's probably people that went to his camp in this room at some point, and he really got it. He introduced me to Coach Frosty, and it's about making the big time where you're at and that's life. Grow where you're planted. I've been able to do that every stop of the way, whether it's Manhattan, Pullman, San Francisco. It's the key to life.

He kind of led me that way, and he sat me down when I was at USF, and he said, we need to really -- what's your mission statement. Why do you do this. It really came down to -- I said, I want to empower others to empower themselves. I want to see people grow, really the nerd gospel as we might call it.

So he's doing that, and for those of you who don't know, he's taking on another battle right now with his health. But he's an absolute stud, and the last thing, he was following our team and I reached out to him, and this, again, like Randy Bennett, that's who I knew him through, and he's been with him this whole way. He said, people are impressed with talent, he said. He said, God cares about character. He said, your mission is bigger than basketball. I don't think these are coincidence that those people had those impacts, and that that brought me here today is pretty special. Like I said, it's a pretty special day for me.

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I guess I'm going to talk about my philosophy of basketball. It's not as exciting. All that said, really thankful to be here.

As far as basketball and the philosophy and just the program, two things. We look at and have done this going back to when I was an assistant at St. Mary's. There's two paradigms or two things we work through, and it's a big picture, and it's getting these 18-year-olds' priorities straight: Faith, family, team and academics, monopolizing their time, and then double down on those things. Team and academics are two full-time jobs really, especially here, and I still haven't coached a guy that didn't have a social life. So I'm still waiting for that. So it's not like we're pressing it, they still seem to have fun in college. College should be fun, but that's a lesson for the next 50 years. Try to keep those priorities because if you're faith and your family aren't right, you're not going to produce right. You're not going to be able to perform. You've got to have a coaching staff that believes in that and feels comfortable in that, and if things aren't going right in those areas that we can guide you in the right place.

Then it gets down to the daily, and it's have a great attitude. It's like, be a giver, not a taker. These players will hear me say, you got into Stanford. You're rounding third base in life; what are you going to do with that. Be proud of your choices you make. Not of your gifts but of the choices, what are you going to do with that, how are you going to spend that opportunity. That's about having gratitude and thankful for each day.

We're playing basketball for goodness sakes, and it's easy for the smart guys to find -- the highly critical mind can find what's wrong with things. Try to hunt the good stuff. Try to find the good stuff. That's a big part of our attitude, and then work ethic. If you want to be good at anything, you'd better put your time into it. We're attracting people that understand that a little bit already, and let's double down on that, the attitude and work ethic.

Then the last piece of our philosophy in that daily is, I've already said it, make the big time where you're at, and a big part of our program will be right now going through the portal and all that stuff. That's why I really knew I wanted the job. There's guys in the portal I'm like, great, who cares. This is Stanford; we're going to be okay. Things are going to be okay. We're going to get people that want to be here.

Worry more about the ones we have, not the ones we don't has been the mantra. It's important. I think it's easy with social media and all these other things to get caught up and worry about others when we've got people in front of us that want to be good. I didn't succeed, but I tried to reach out to all the players that are in the program right

now and let them know that you guys are invested, you guys are in, and if we're going to be good, you guys are going to be the leaders, you guys are the guys that want to be here. That's how this works, and it's always worked. As I said, this is my fourth head job. Going back, I always use St. Mary's as the model for that. So that's important.

Then there's no way -- Bernard didn't know this. There's no way I was going to take the job because for 30 years, it's true, I've been saying that this is the best job, period, and I meant that sincerely, and that was before Coach Montgomery got to No. 1 in the country. He was in the midst -- he had just started going to the tournaments.

My reasoning was this: Duke is a pretty good job. Pretty good. They understood the student-athlete, and Coach K wouldn't hang a banner until everyone had graduated in their program. Then things changed. They started taking one-and-done guys. So they started recruiting against Kentucky and -- that's fine. It's good. Do what you want to do. Every time they didn't take one of those guys as an elite player, that was academic -- I said, Stanford, you can be something different than everyone else. He got it, and he got it to No. 1 in the country, and it was Nick Robinson I think, Christian Hernandez, and these guys were studs, people and workers, and I remember looking and -- I'm getting old, but I think they were like 28-0, and Nick Robinson hits a half-court shot, and playing in Maples is crazy, and I'm just like, I'm telling my -- everyone in my business was like, that's a bad job. I'm like, no, it's the best job. It's the best job. You can be so good here. You attract the people you attract here. You can be great.

You've got to sell it and believe in it, and you don't understand, those people are elite. They're workers. They're achievers. You've got the place. You've got their home. Other people want to chase the other ones. Right here. Let's go. So it's easy for me to believe that. I've been saying it for 30 years so I'd better back it up. I was like if anyone knew I was going to not do this, they'd be like, you are a fraud, Kyle Smith.

I had a real argument with a person when Coach Montgomery took the Warriors job, in a bar. He was like, that was a great move. I was like, I don't know; gosh, he has the best job in the country. And I believe it can be. He proved he's pretty good. He might have been an outlier because he went and won over at the other place where they hadn't won in 50 years. So we're going to find out if it's a job or a coach, and hopefully a little bit of both, and hopefully I know what I'm doing.

I've got it all out there. I said, might as well get it done. But hopefully you know a little bit more about me, and I think that's important as we move forward, and I don't think

I need to say that I'm beyond thrilled to have this opportunity. Go Card.

(Applause.)

**Q. How do you think your philosophy of coaching fits?**

KYLE SMITH: Like a glove. I really had this argument with -- I won't say the coach at my first job, an assistant. He's like, we're trying to get some guys that -- academically, we can -- and don't get me wrong, I'll ask for guys. Their 4.0 guys should be getting in here. But I just think like-minded guys that are achievement oriented are going to succeed. They're going to do well. I felt that, and some of it's my playing experience. We were a pretty good school academically, we were Division III, but we all kind of had similar goals, and I think that's kind of where it's resonated with me.

**Q. Curious how your time at Columbia you feel prepared you since that was an Ivy League school, how coaching at an academic school has prepared you for this job?**

KYLE SMITH: A lot. I didn't realize how good the players were in the Ivy League when I got there and how good the recruiting -- got a lot of former graduates that are assistant coaches, so we had to learn how to cast a wide net, global net, in really identifying the guys that can play, that have the academic credentials. They're there. You've got to work at it.

I always knew we all -- all eight schools in that league were always leery of what was looming, like please don't get the call from that school in Palo Alto because that was over.

Again, in that niche I know among academic realms, I know what it felt like. We were all a little fearful of that. I've been there.

We had a few guys that probably might have been able to get in the Ivy League at Washington State, so I was like, geez, I guess I'm just an Ivy League coach. I attracted a few to Pullman, so the idea that that was a great training ground, I think.

**Q. I'll ask you about scheduling. A coach doesn't have full control over scheduling, but you have some decent scheduling. I'm going to ask you three schools would you want to schedule: Washington State, St. Mary's and USF?**

KYLE SMITH: None. Was that a trick question? No, I don't. Obviously you've got to play somebody, but I do think with -- there's a lot of philosophy. In this modern day

you've got to know who's in your program, what's the right steps to take for that year. Like for this year honestly we -- when I was at Washington State, we didn't know who we had in the program, and we were like, we've got to grow into this thing, and you run the risk when we didn't schedule up that we had to win a lot of league games to make ourselves -- and we were fortunate to do that, but it worked out.

The year before we had a really good team, and we overscheduled a little bit, but we lost two starters for the year, and I was like, that actually was our better coaching job, believe it or not, that we were an NIT team with -- Myles Rice wasn't available and Dishon Jackson.

It depends year to year on that, but no desire -- I'm pretty sure Randy, haven't talked to him, but that scrimmage will stay in place. We'll scrimmage them gladly, closed doors.

USF, no thanks, and Washington State, no thanks.

**Q. You've made a lot of success finding under-recruited players through algorithmic reasons. How do you hope to incorporate analytics both in recruiting and on court here at Stanford?**

KYLE SMITH: Yeah, along the same ways. First, we've got to identify who is recruitable, and that's the most important thing. That's the trickiest part here. You don't want to waste any time on guys that you think might be -- I heard he has Stanford grades. Well, we'd better find out. Verify. Trust and verify.

But a lot of things, depending on levels, international play, where some of those guys are 18-year-olds playing pro leagues. You can kind of figure out what translates, some of the UIBL stuff and data like that. Then sometimes if you're at a school like Menlo School or -- there's certain schools, Branson, they're like, okay, they're going to be prepared -- whether they get in or not they're going to be prepared for a place like -- they're going to thrive. Their parents put them at a place like that for a reason, and I think you have a huge advantage when you walk in the door, like yeah, this is Kyle Smith from Stanford, I'd like to talk to you about your son.

**Q. I was wondering, you've only been here for a day or so, but what is the identity of Stanford if you had to summarize it in one word for you?**

KYLE SMITH: Achievers. One word. That's all I've got, right?

**Q. You put in the tape of a guy that you might be interested in. What do you see? What are you looking**



for?

KYLE SMITH: What I'm looking for, we're looking for six-tool guys. I've been reaching out to Michael Lewis forever trying to get -- I've been doing this Moneyball thing for basketball. He's a five-tool guy.

I want guys that can dribble, pass, drive, shoot, defend, rebound. Really well-rounded player, and I think actually there's been quite a few of those guys in this program. I think they're naturally good feel guys. They're skillful. They have good size and length. That's the goal. To find those guys that it's easy to play with, both sides of the ball, and the more of those you accumulate, the better you can be.

**Q. How long do you have to look at this tape or look at this player before you say, all right, this guy can play for me?**

KYLE SMITH: It depends. It depends. You have less time as a head coach to really dig into that, and you've got to trust your assistants and having guys that you've coached with and maybe even coached in the sense that I think we'll have some guys on our staff that have gone through the analytics piece, understand it.

We're pretty connected that way. Sometimes it's a long time, sometimes it's not that long. That's very vague.

**Q. I know you talked about worrying about the guys you have and not the ones you don't, but there are some significantly talented guys in the portal. Are you going to be reaching out to them? What's the plan on keeping the existing talent, and then longer term, Stanford does have some unique hurdles when comes to transfers and NILs. What's your approach going to be with that?**

KYLE SMITH: Yeah, I've discussed with Bernard and others about that. Like I said, I reached out to guys that are in first, and I've also reached out to the guys that are in the portal. We'll see how it goes.

I think there's a little bit -- I've pitched what I think is obviously we have to establish that people -- the reason I'm attracted to this place is people are going to be at Stanford not for the dollars they can earn in NIL. Hopefully it's for the degree, for the experience, for lifetime relationships, and we've got to keep selling that to the players in the program or the people in the portal.

Actually, I won't name names, but it's funny, how was your experience at Stanford? I love Stanford. I'm like, what are we doing. You love it, it's rare. It's rare that you say, man,

I love being here. I'm like, okay. What are you doing in -- let's figure this out. If you love a place, man, let's not walk away from that.

Then, like I said, obviously the transfers and grad transfers. Tara gave me marching orders to maybe say that would be something we could really benefit from, and I do believe kids that are graduating from Ivy League schools I think would probably be good graduate school candidates. I don't know. Are we that hard? We might be. Might be.

I think USC women had a lot of success with some of those Ivy League transfers. Just putting that out there, for Tara and Kyle.

**Q. Wondering how you feel you might have evolved or changed as a coach during your time in Pullman?**

KYLE SMITH: I actually softened up a lot, and that might have been more in the last 10 years or so or eight years ago. Just our family has changed. I've had really good help there. I can't thank those guys because our family situation is so unique, and having to delegate and really trust in my assistants and letting things go a little bit.

There's moments there, people are like, you're really calm on the sidelines; well, I've got a really good staff and probably have really good players, so that usually helps. Then sometimes I've got to -- man, it's in God's hands, let it go.

That's probably where I've -- that's hard for most coaches. We want to control everything. That's kind of our job. But sometimes it is -- you've done your job and now they have to do it, so I think that's probably where I've softened up a little bit and let the process take care of itself.

**Q. You've addressed a lot of the aspects of recruiting here. Just additionally curious about seemingly less time and more vacancies particularly in this off-season. How do you address that on top of --**

KYLE SMITH: Just got to plow through it, man. I think the last two springs have been really taxing on all coaches, myself and family, and it's disappointing, but as I say, I might as well do it here.

There are, there are some obstacles that I'm sure on the timelines and deadlines and as far as getting guys in school, and I'll be working on that, but I do think it kind of puts the people that go in the portal, kind of puts you at a disadvantage, like man, I want to be able to -- we want to be able to field a team.

I'll work through it, and we'll figure it out.

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**Q. You were at a school that had a long NCAA drought that you ended this season. What did you learn from that process in Pullman? This school has had a pretty long NCAA drought; what will help you end it maybe even quicker than you did in Pullman?**

KYLE SMITH: Again, give in to the process. I'm not going to put a timeline on it. It's just, let's do what we do, and like I didn't expect -- like we were picked 10th this year in Washington State, and I looked at it and I thought we were pretty good. That's why actually these guys in the portal, I'm like, hey, fellas, we had nine new faces who went to the tournament. Get back in here, we're going to the tournament, potentially.

We don't put -- we just go day-over-day improvement, literally, and keep walking that walk and you don't know what's ahead. People think I'm crazy. We don't put goals like team goals. There's one goal: We want to be in the NCAA tournament. That's the No. 1 goal. But we work on improving every day because I don't want to put a ceiling on what we can be. We had a chance to win the league.

I regretfully lost to UW on the last game of the year, and it happens, but to have a chance to win the Pac-12 Championship in the last year with that group was sensational.

But I think obviously I think less is more a little bit on that. Focus on the process and things will take care of themselves. You will get better. You will improve. You can't put that kind of -- I know that's going to be probably one of the stories. It's been a long time, it's been a long time. Well, we'll get there. Believe in it. We'll get there.

**Q. One of the first players you ever coached in San Diego was Chris Grant, and on the roster this year we have Cameron Grant. What does it mean to you now to be in the next generation?**

KYLE SMITH: That means I'm getting old. There's an obvious answer.

But yeah, no, amazing that Chris produced a son that's in Stanford. (Laughter.) He's a Kenyatta College product that played for Coach la Garza, and he's an awesome guy and obviously very smart and talented. But it makes you feel old.

But I know where that DNA, that goes back to Coach Orlich, South Lake Tahoe. He's an end guy. I'm sure he's a hard-nosed tough kid and I'm sure probably someone that you can build culture with. I'm sure of it.

**Q. Obviously Stanford is moving to the ACC next year. I forgot about the schedule for this upcoming season, but how excited are you to maybe play a lot of historic teams, bluebloods like Duke and North Carolina, go to the Dean Dome, go to Cameron Indoor and come here to Maples?**

KYLE SMITH: Well, when I was at Washington State I thought I was silly, and then when I got the job, I'm like, that's awesome. I mean that. I was like, man, Cameron Indoor arena? Someone said Syracuse -- I'm like, oh, yeah, Syracuse is in that league, too. I'm not looking forward to going to the Carrier Dome in the middle of winter, but it's awesome, to be honest.

Then frightening. But that's all right. That's how coaches think.

But just to be able to -- I was telling my wife, they care about basketball. This is Tobacco Road. It's a big-time deal. It's awesome.

I think there is a little -- I don't know if we're there, but definitely there is comparison between that school in Durham and here a little bit, so it'll be quite the bar is high there, but it'll be interesting to compete against them.

**Q. At the Pac-12 tournament a couple weeks back, I asked one of your players about what they most enjoy playing for you, and one of the comments they said was you're really heavy into statistics. What is your statistical approach to the game, and how many stats do you make your guys memorize? How does that work?**

KYLE SMITH: Poor Jaylen. Jaylen Wells, I was like, Jaylen, that's the best you could come up with, that I do a lot of stats? I was like, we really don't. Coaching really does come to relationships, but we do have a lot of them. Like I said, it appeals to guys, the growth mindset. I think guys really want to -- they really want to know where they stand, where they need to get better, will get a lot of feedback. There's about 60 of them when we play and when we practice. I'm telling you it's not as crazy as it is, but every live situation in practice we watch them, and then we come back as a staff, and it keeps our staff united, too.

We watch it together as a group, and one guy has got defense and rebounding and the other guy has got ball handling and offense, and I'm kind of like the judge, and then just kind of punch it in the Excel spreadsheet and it comes out and you get what we call your HPPP, hustle points per possession, and that's kind of how we measure how hard you're competing, and it's quantifying the intangible things that help us win.

I think I would imagine here they would like it. I think the players would like it. They'd want to know what do I have to do to get better. There's been good results, man, and I think -- I tried my best, I told them not to reference a previous staff at all. It's a hard job, and I'm like, man, I want to move forward.

The one thing I would -- this team could be really good. We've got to get go defensively, like defend, rebound -- that's what I missed. Philosophy, defend, rebound, take care of the ball. That's kind of where all these things have started, and it goes into talking about the analytics, so that's a little bit is measuring how hard you compete in getting those guys their opportunities.

**Q. I think somebody else brought up the recruiting algorithm that you developed at USF. I'm curious how that's changed over the years and also maybe how you've adjusted that to the NIL era because recruiting has changed since then?**

KYLE SMITH: There is another layer with NIL. It's like you want to find out who are the best players, and then you kind of -- there's no who's asking for what, and it's about getting those guys that really they're leading with I want to be here, I want to be good. They have the right attitude, versus you've got to talk to such-and-such.

That's changed for sure.

But I just still think there's guys -- there's enough guys out there, and I use the -- I told Bernard we had at my last stop -- well, two stops ago, but a guy named Jamaree Bouyea, who was from Salinas, and I thought it was a great joke at the Olympic Club. I said, yeah, we had to beat Fresno Pacific, and Damon Stoudamire and Rodney Terry are looking at me like, who's this kid, like no, no, we had to beat Fresno Pacific, a DII school, and he's playing in the NBA right now.

But it's because he had not just the analytics, it's fit. He was at Palma High School or University of San Francisco. He had actually applied to the school on his own. I'm like, he wants to be here.

That's item No. 3. Great attitude, great work ethic, wants to be here. There's a lot of people that want to be here and should be lucky to be here.

So we've got to get that back in if it's not there. I think it's there.

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