



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Athletic Communications

DANNY GONZALES NAMED HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. --- Danny Gonzales, a native of Albuquerque who played football at Valley High School before playing for UNM and then serving as an assistant coach, is coming home.

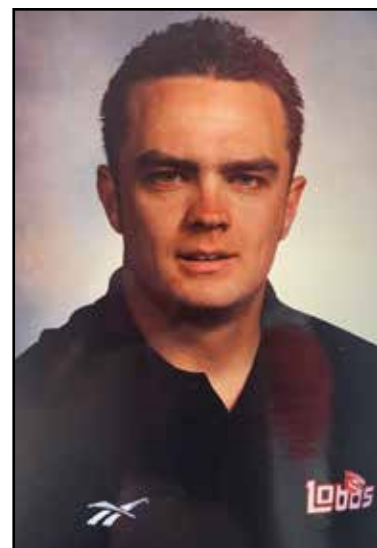
Gonzales, who has taken part in bowl games in 14 of the past 16 seasons, has been named the 32nd head coach in program history at The University of New Mexico. The announcement was made by Director of Athletics Eddie Nuñez in conjunction with UNM President Dr. Garnett S. Stokes. Gonzales was announced as the head coach at the Lobo men's basketball game on Tuesday night, and will officially be introduced at a 12:30 p.m. press conference on Wednesday in the U.S. Bank Club Level at Dreamstyle Arena.

The new Lobo head coach is certainly familiar with UNM, as a player, staff member and as a Lobo assistant coach, as well as through his time coaching against UNM. He joins his mentor and former coach Rocky Long as Lobo football players returning to coach their alma mater. In a 2006 article in the Albuquerque Journal, Long predicted that Gonzales would one day be the head coach of the Lobos.

Gonzales comes to UNM after spending the past two seasons at Arizona State as defensive coordinator, and the previous seven before that as safeties coach and defensive coordinator at San Diego State. In 2018, he was a nominee for the Broyles Award, given to the most outstanding assistant coach in college football.

Gonzales came to UNM as a walk-on safety and punter after playing for the Valley Vikings. Gonzales lettered three times with the Lobos and was the 1998 winner of the Chuck Cummings Memorial Award, which is given for morale and spirit, and was the Lobo Club First Team Award winner for unselfish devotion to the team. At UNM, Gonzales played under Dennis Franchione and the aforementioned Long. Gonzales was a part of UNM's 1997 WAC division championship team that went 9-4 and played in the 1997 Insight.com Bowl against Arizona.

After his playing career, he served as a graduate assistant for Long, helping UNM start a school-record seven consecutive bowl eligible seasons from 2001-07. In 2003, Gonzales moved over a few offices to become video coordinator, a role he held from 2003-05. From 2006-08, he coached safeties and special teams, and he was a part of the coaching staff for UNM's 2007 squad that went 9-4 and won the New Mexico Bowl 23-0 over the Colin Kaepernick-led Nevada Wolf Pack. That win ended a 46-year bowl victory drought for the university.



Danny Gonzales as a Lobo senior in 1998

Under Gonzales' watch in 2007, former walk-on placekicker John Sullivan became UNM's third consensus All-America selection, hitting a school-record 29 field goals. Sullivan did that despite a torn ACL. Sullivan was just one of many specialists that excelled under the tutelage of Gonzales, a former punter and defensive back. In addition, placekicker Kenny Byrd was a first team All-MW pick, punter Jordan Scott was honorable mention, and kicker James Aho was named a Freshman All-America.

Future NFL draft picks Glover Quin (Houston Texans) and Quincy Black (Tampa Bay Buccaneers) also earned all-conference honors at safety under Gonzales.

Overall, Lobo safeties had 55 pass breakups over the 2007-08 seasons, and the 2007 New Mexico squad ranked 13th nationally in total defense, 14th in scoring defense and 20th in passing defense.

For the past two seasons, Gonzales has served on Herm Edwards' staff at Arizona State, where the Sun Devils have made it to back-to-back bowls and won two straight Territorial Cup games over Arizona.

In his first season in Tempe, Gonzales oversaw a Sun Devil defense that allowed the fewest points (332) since the 2012 season. ASU held nine of its opponents under 30 points, including seven consecutive games to start the season. ASU was one of seven teams to accomplish this, a feat that has only been done five times at the school in the Pac-10/12 era.

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Despite having one of the nation's youngest defenses, Gonzales managed to significantly improve that side of the ball. Sun Devil freshmen (true or redshirt) combined for 3,300+ snaps on defense in 2018. Comparatively, freshmen combined for just 918 total defensive snaps played in 2017 and 1,035 in 2016.

Under Gonzales' tutelage, Merlin Robertson was named the Pac-12 Freshman Defensive Player of the Year after becoming the first Sun Devil freshman to lead the team in tackles since Jason Shivers in 2001. Aashari Crosswell also earned All-Pac-12 Honorable Mention for a campaign in which he led ASU in interceptions (four) and pass breakups (nine) and was seventh in the nation with 127 yards on interception returns.

During the regular season, ASU held opponents to just 3.5 points per fourth quarter, the fifth-lowest total in FBS. For comparison, the defense ranked 112th, 124th, and 121st in the same category over the past three seasons. Additionally, ASU allowed just 4.9 points per first quarter in the regular season, moving its national rank from 82nd in 2017 to 36th nationally in 2018. The Sun Devils allowed 25.1 points per game in the regular season, good for 49th nationally compared with 103rd (32.8 ppg) in 2017.

ASU finished the regular season tied for 20th nationally in fewest passing plays over 40 yards allowed, giving up just five. ASU ranked 90th in the category in 2017, allowing 12 such plays and 127th in 2016, allowing 22 passing plays over 40 yards allowed. Additionally, the Sun Devils finished 60th in the regular season allowing 5.63 yards per play this year, moving up over 50 spots from the team's 111th place finish in the category in 2017 (6.33 yards per play). ASU had finished 109th or worse in the category in three consecutive seasons prior to the current campaign.

In 2019, it was more of the same as the Sun Devils ranked 22nd in rushing defense, and 19th in yards per carry against at just 3.40 yards per carry. The Sun Devils once again lowered their points allowed per game to 23.1 (41st) from 25.5 (50th) in 2018. Prior to Gonzales' arrival, Arizona State allowed 32.8 points in 2017 (103rd), 39.8 points in 2016 (123rd), and 33.5 points in 2015 (99th).

Furthermore, in 2019 the Sun Devils picked up 22 takeaways (13 fumbles and nine interceptions), good for a tie for 18th in the FBS. The Sun Devil defense continued to limit big plays, ranking tied for 14th nationally with just eight plays of 40 yards or more against them. The Sun Devils allowed just one rush of 30 yards or more (tying for third nationally) and none of 40 yards or more (one of five teams to make that claim).



Danny Gonzales (left) and Arizona State head coach Herm Edwards during a game at Sun Devil Stadium (ASU photo)

The two years with Arizona State followed a seven-year stint under Long at San Diego State, the first six as safeties coach and the final as defensive coordinator.

The Aztecs made seven straight bowls with Gonzales on staff, winning three Mountain West titles and three division titles along the way. In his first season as defensive coordinator in 2017, the Aztecs went 10-3, the program's third straight double-digit win season, and the team played in the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl. That year, the Aztecs ranked 21st nationally in scoring defense (20.2 points per game) and 11th nationally in total defense (314.8 yards per game). The Aztecs that year allowed the fewest plays of 10 yards or more (101) of any team in the FBS.

It was a season that saw the Aztecs pick up a pair of Pac-12 wins, defeating Stanford 20-17 and Arizona State 30-20. Four Aztecs were named All-Mountain West on defense and his defensive charges picked up three Mountain West Player of the Week awards.

From 2011-16, Gonzales served as the safeties coach, coming to the Aztecs when Long was named head coach for the 2011 season.

From 2011-16, SDSU's 100 interceptions were the third-most in the country, while its 14 interceptions returned for a touchdown were tied for the fifth-most over that span. The Aztecs' 49 interceptions in 2015 and 2016 were the most in a two-year span in FBS play since Boston College had 51 in the 2007 and 2008 campaigns. SDSU led the country in interceptions (26) in 2016.

In 2015, the Aztecs finished among the top 10 in the four main defensive categories, including a tie for second with 23 interceptions, fifth in total defense (287.3), seventh in scoring defense (16.4) and rushing defense (108.7) and 10th in passing defense (178.6).

SDSU produced one of the best defensive efforts in school history in 2014, finishing in the top 20 nationally in nearly every defensive category, including scoring defense (13th) and total defense (16th).



Danny Gonzales (left) and San Diego State head coach Rocky Long conferring with an official (courtesy San Diego Union-Tribune)

Gonzales coached Nat Berhe and Eric Pinkins, both of whom were selected in the 2014 NFL Draft. Berhe was a fifth-round selection of the New York Giants, while Pinkins went in the sixth round to the defending Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks.

Under Gonzales' guidance, Berhe became the first Aztec safety in the Mountain West era (since 1999) to garner all-conference accolades three years in a row. Berhe, who landed on the 2013 preseason watch lists for the Jim Thorpe Award and Lott IMPACT Trophy, capped a brilliant collegiate career with first-team All-MW honors after leading the team with a career-high 99 tackles, including 60 solo stops.

As a team in 2012, the Aztec defense topped the MWC in rushing defense with 133.5 yards per game. SDSU also showed dramatic improvement in that statistic at the national level, climbing from the 78th spot in 2011 to the 28th position in 2012.

Gonzales was part of a staff that saw the Aztec defense finish 2011 with the No. 1 conference ranking in sacks (2.23/g), tackles for loss (6.54/g), interceptions (15) and turnovers gained (28).

Gonzales has a pair of degrees from The University of New Mexico, earning his bachelor's degree in business administration and general management in 1998 and a master's degree in physical education and recreation in 2002. Danny and his wife Sandra have four children: Cole, Jake, Chloe and Abby.

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT DANNY GONZALES

"I would like to thank Danny for all that he has done for this program in just these last two seasons. We had a vision in mind when we arrived in Tempe and he was pivotal in helping turn that vision toward fruition. He is obviously one of the great young defensive minds in the country and when you have that kind of talent on your staff, you have to accept other places will take notice. We want all of our assistant coaches to succeed, because that means that our program is succeeding. I will always put our coaches in a situation where they have the best opportunity achieve that level success for themselves and for their families. I know that Danny will represent us well in Albuquerque and embody everything that he excelled at here while he was a Sun Devil." --- Herm Edwards, head coach, Arizona State

DANNY GONZALES YEAR-BY-YEAR

| School (Pos.) | Year | Overall | | | | Conference | | | Bowl/Postseason | |
|----------------------------|------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| | | W | L | T | .PCT | W | L | T | | .PCT |
| UNM (GA) | 1999 | 4 | 7 | 0 | .364 | 3 | 4 | 0 | .429 | |
| UNM (GA) | 2000 | 5 | 7 | 0 | .417 | 3 | 4 | 0 | .429 | |
| UNM (GA) | 2001 | 6 | 5 | 0 | .545 | 4 | 3 | 0 | .571 | |
| UNM (GA) | 2002 | 7 | 7 | 0 | .500 | 5 | 2 | 0 | .714 | Sega Las Vegas (L) |
| UNM (Video Coord.) | 2003 | 8 | 5 | 0 | .615 | 5 | 2 | 0 | .714 | Sega Las Vegas (L) |
| UNM (Video Coord.) | 2004 | 7 | 5 | 0 | .583 | 5 | 2 | 0 | .714 | Emerald (L) |
| UNM (Video Coord.) | 2005 | 6 | 5 | 0 | .545 | 4 | 4 | 0 | .500 | |
| UNM (Saf./Special Teams) | 2006 | 6 | 7 | 0 | .462 | 4 | 4 | 0 | .500 | New Mexico (L) |
| UNM (Saf./Special Teams) | 2007 | 9 | 4 | 0 | .692 | 5 | 3 | 0 | .625 | New Mexico (W) |
| UNM (Saf./Special Teams) | 2008 | 4 | 8 | 0 | .333 | 2 | 6 | 0 | .250 | |
| SDSU (Saf.) | 2011 | 8 | 5 | 0 | .615 | 4 | 3 | 0 | .571 | New Orleans (L) |
| SDSU (Saf.) | 2012 | 9 | 4 | 0 | .692 | 7 | 1 | 0 | .875* | Poinsettia (L) |
| SDSU (Saf.) | 2013 | 8 | 5 | 0 | .615 | 6 | 2 | 0 | .750 | Famous Idaho (W) |
| SDSU (Saf.) | 2014 | 7 | 6 | 0 | .538 | 5 | 3 | 0 | .625^ | SDCCU Poinsettia (L) |
| SDSU (Saf.) | 2015 | 11 | 3 | 0 | .786 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1.000^* | Hawai'i (W) |
| SDSU (Saf.) | 2016 | 11 | 3 | 0 | .786 | 6 | 2 | 0 | .750^* | Las Vegas (W) |
| SDSU (DC/Saf.) | 2017 | 10 | 3 | 0 | .769 | 6 | 2 | 0 | .750 | Armed Forces (L) |
| ASU (AHC/DC) | 2018 | 7 | 6 | 0 | .538 | 5 | 4 | 0 | .556 | Mitsubishi Las Vegas (L) |
| ASU (AHC/DC) | 2019 | 7 | 5 | 0 | .583 | 3 | 6 | 0 | .333 | Tony The Tiger Sun |
| Totals (19 seasons) | | 140 | 100 | 0 | .583 | 90 | 57 | 0 | .612 | |

