

**San Diego State Football  
Chuck Long Press Conference  
Aztec Athletics Center  
December 17, 2005**

**SDSU Head Coach Chuck Long**

General Comments:

“It is truly an honor and a privilege to be the new head football coach at San Diego State University. My wife and I are excited about this opportunity. I would like to thank President Webber for overseeing the entire search. I know a lot of planning goes into the search. I’ve witnessed a few searches myself throughout my career. I’d like to thank (director of athletics) Jeff Schemmel. From the first interview on, he told me how he was going to go about the search and I thought he executed it honestly and never wavered from it. It made it a lot easier for me and I’m sure it made it a lot easier for the other candidates. He told me exactly what he was going to do, when he was going to do it and when we were going to get it done and it went right down the middle. I want to thank my wife Lisa, who has been around the country a little bit, really for her support throughout this whole process. It’s not easy for a wife, and we happen to have five kids, so it’s not an easy process for them. My wife is the rock in our family through all those coaching years and keeps our kids calm, cool, and collected all the way through.

“It’s a really exciting day for me, for us. You’re a head football coach at a major university and I’m happy to say I’m glad it’s here. I feel that this program here is ripe, its ready to take off and I’ve felt this way for years about San Diego State. In looking at the situation here through the interview process, looking at the facilities and what has been built here, I believe this university is hungry to win – hungry to win championships. I’d like to thank Jeff for hiring me. All the 10 candidates were very good, they’re all very good. Jimbo Fisher is a very good football coach. But I’m glad they saw the championship teams that I’ve been a part of, which I have been a part of on every level, and that makes a difference. What I plan on doing here, among other things, is to win championships. That’s what I’m here for and that will be my sole purpose here on the football field itself and I believe we can get it done. I’m excited about the challenge, I met with the team earlier before the press conference and it felt like everybody in that room wanted to be a part of that. I don’t think some of the kids in that room have been part of something like a championship, maybe they have in high school – I’m not sure but I’ll find that out. But I felt that the room was full of energy and was ready to go. In fact a couple of the quarterbacks and a couple of the players there said, “Hey, lets go out and throw the football right now.” I told them I can’t throw the ball right now. We are extremely excited. President Webber and Jeff you have been extremely great with Lisa and of course your wife Lori (Schemmel) has been great all the way through this since we landed yesterday and she appreciates that.

“It’s been a whirlwind tour and you almost feel like you’re a rock star going through all of this. I will honestly say that I’ve met some great people already. We had a great dinner last night. I’ve met with some of the all-time great players here - Fred Dwyer, Brian Sipe, among others. I am not a coach that will say or rely on the excuse that we have to wait four years to get my recruits in here. It is a win now approach. We are going to win now with this football team. I told them that

today and I told them simply – you are my recruits and we are going to win right now. That’s our goal this year. I myself can’t wait to get started.”

On hiring a staff:

“Obviously I’m going to have to hire some coaches and that’s going to take a little bit of time. I do want to mention Tom Craft. I do know Tom through his Palomar days and he is a heck of a coach and he really laid a nice foundation here at San Diego State and I wish him all the luck in the world. Coaching is not an easy business and I myself, seven years ago was caught in the middle of a transition as well at Iowa. So I know how hard that can be and I am sensitive to that. Therefore I will interview the current staff and give them ample time to interview and move on from there. I don’t know how many will be retained but obviously I’m going to bring in some of my own staff. That is going to start immediately. I’ve already contacted some people and they are ready to go, and I will be on that tomorrow. We are entering a dead period right now in recruiting so that gives me time to meet with the staff and contact some future staff members.

“I had the privilege to be with Coach Ferentz at Iowa during his first year on the ground floor of that program, which is now an excellent program and obviously with coach Stoops at Oklahoma. One thing I know about those two situations was that they took their time with staffing. It wasn’t a hurry up. The media and the fans want to know who is going to be the guy, this guy, that guy, but it’s important that I get the right guy. And the right guy for me has chemistry. The right guys with the right chemistry and the right energy – that is what is important to me. I did mention that my goal is to get a staff that has been on championship teams in the past. I do have some folks now that are interested that have been on championship teams. That’s important, that’s important for this football team. I am going to try and hire three to five or so quickly, so we get in position to recruit when it opens up again to a contact period on January 2. We have some time to do that. I mentioned that I am going to interview some current staff this week and then I’m going to start making some phone calls and getting guys into place. My goal is to get all of our staff in place by the time players get back from winter break, which is around January 17 or 18.”

On his goals:

“I mentioned my goals – we are going to win now. We are going to win championships now. This is a place that is ready to do that. I can feel it, I think President Webber and Jeff Schemmel feel it and it’s going to be some exciting times.

“I did have the privilege of living in California. I lived up in Orange Country for five years in the early 90s. Kind of a sideline story, I think we are the only couple that bought our house high and sold it low, and by the way our house has tripled since then. That’s California for you. The goal is simple, it’s a championship goal and we hope everybody is along for the ride because it’s going to be a lot of fun.”

On academics:

“Academically, I am a coach that believes what you do on the field is a direct relation of what you do off the field. I truly believe that and that starts with academics. We will have stringent academic rules here. It’s important to me that players graduate and graduate on time. In this day in age with the competition in job hunting if you don’t have your degree you have no chance, especially in a state like California that has 40 million people and everybody is fighting for the

same jobs. I take a lot of pride in the fact I have graduated 100 percent of my players that I've coached. That means a lot to me. There will be stringent academic rules. Players will go to class, we will have study halls, tutors will be in place, and when you have all those things in place you have to try to fail. We're not going to let them do that we are going to make sure we are on top of that. I will bring coaches that have great experience on how to do that and it will be a great situation."

On recruiting:

"We will obviously hit California. My plan is to start in the city of San Diego and go out. I do believe in home grown talent, keeping them close to home, and building a fence around the city to try and keep them here. That's going to be a priority for us. From there it's the rest of California, Hawaii, and any state that we have high school connections with. We will try to maintain those - Arizona, Nevada, we had talked about getting into Texas some and I will hire some coaches with Texas ties. But it's all going to start right here and canvas on out."

On SDSU alumni and being visible in the community:

"I mentioned the three great players I met this morning, and I am one that will be visible, very visible out in the community. I want to embrace tradition here. I would like to have the same type of legacy as, and I know it's big, Don Coryell. That is what I want to have and I want bring San Diego State back to that era so to speak. I'm anxious to meet him as well. I have been coached by a couple of members from his tree. These trees go out a long way. Jeff mentioned Ernie Zampese and Dan Henning is another one - those are two that are from that Don Coryell tree. I want to embrace tradition and I want to get those guys back around our guys. I think that's exciting for our players, especially when you leave a legacy like that, you want to get the old ball-coach around. That's the kind of legacy I want to leave here and that is my goal.

"As far as community relations, I want to be very visible and I want our players to be visible as well. It's important in any community, especially in a big city, to be out there to help. If there are any functions we can do, we are open to that. That, for me, was a large reason why I was on the board of charity back in Oklahoma. I've hosted a charity auction and various things along the way. I'm excited about getting out in the community. I feel that as a head coach that is one of the number one things you need to do."

On relations with the media:

"I am anxious to build relationships with you. All I ask is that you be fair. Every now and then you will take a shot, and that is ok. As long as you show up, we'll talk about it. I know how it is and I've dealt with media all my life. I've had great training. One of the things that really helped me is being an ex NFL quarterback you have to deal with the media on a daily basis as the quarterback. I will teach our players how to work with you guys. The type of image that we present is very important to me. I always felt the football program is the face of the university. Everyone looks at the face first, if they like what they see, they dig deeper. I'm anxious to build relationships with you. I've been easily available. And again I want you to have access to our players and our coaching staff as well. We'll have some fun. Like I said I've been dealing with media for a long time and I've actually enjoyed it. My dad was a part of the media - a journalism major and then public relations after that - so I know how it all works."

On turning the program around:

“I see opportunity here. I guess what’s helped me is I’ve been a part of turn-around programs in the past. As a player at Iowa back in the early 80s, we had come off 20 losing years in a row and we turned it around early on. I think that was the first time I was introduced to that or part of building a foundation and building something up. I was on the ground floor of Kirk Ferentz for a year and I could see where that was going and where it is right now. At Oklahoma, they had come off five or six losing years in a row, (Bob) Stoops comes in and we turned that program around.

“I come out here and the facilities are good, they’re right in place. They’ve done a great job of keeping a shovel in the ground. I saw a shovel in the ground today with the building of the swimming pool. President Weber’s really led a great thing here as far as building facilities, a lot better than (other schools). So, I’m ready to take on the challenge.

“I think (SDSU football) is a diamond in the rough, but we’re going to have to roll up our sleeves to get it there. I don’t know any other way. Even with the success we’ve had at Oklahoma the last six years, every year’s been rolling the sleeves and it just hasn’t been easy. At times it looks easy, but it’s not. There’s been some losing years back-to-back, six or seven years in a row and it’s going to require hard work and I challenged our team today. I said, ‘If you’re willing to put in the work, 100 percent effort, (our coaches) will take you the rest of the way.’ That was my promise to them.”

On the benefit of having recruited in California in the past:

“It’s a benefit because after living in Orange County and recruiting throughout the entire state of California, it does help. I do have some ties right here in San Diego.”

On being behind in recruiting:

“Naturally, you’re going to think that way, but we already have seven commitments. There are a lot of schools out there that don’t have any (commitments). That was a really good start, and of course we had some in this weekend. But that’s why the NCAA has that February signing day. It allows you to have some coaching change and still have another month to recruit. January will be big for us.”

On recruiting in Southern California as opposed to Oklahoma:

“The thing about Oklahoma that people don’t realize is that there are three million people in the entire state. We would sign maybe four or five student-athletes a year. Well what did we have to do, we had to go elsewhere. We had to go to Texas and fight everybody down there, a couple in California and Florida. The additional advantage here is a well-populated state and a well-populated city to start with. I know people in San Diego County identify with San Diego State, they know all about them and that’s a good start. That’s why I want to start recruiting from here and go out. I want to start in San Diego and hit it hard here. I think we can get more players in San Diego County than we could in the entire state of Oklahoma. California is one of those major states like Texas, Florida and Ohio.”

On continuing as a coach with Oklahoma at the Holiday Bowl:

“I haven’t thought that far ahead, I’m going to be here through the 22nd and then go from there. Coach Stoops and I are going to work that out and I’m going to see what he wants to do. My whole focus is right here at this program. I’m not going to call plays; he’s already going in a different direction now. If I do anything it’s just seeing if the Oklahoma quarterback is making the right drop, but I haven’t thought that far ahead yet.”

On playing a tough schedule:

“(Jeff Schemmel and I) haven’t actually sat down and talked about that in length. We want to fight for a BCS game, that’s part of the challenge, winning the conference and fighting for a BCS game. It’s been proven in our conference with Utah when they did that, so I believe it’s out there for us. In order to do that, you’ve got to have some good scheduling early to make sure you have enough BCS points at the end of the year. That’s something we’ll talk about. I believe our schedule is set for next year, we’re playing Wisconsin on the road, which will be a big challenge for us. But I think in the future we’ll continue to do that, schedule a major conference team from the Big 10 or the Pac-10, just to make sure that we’re in that BCS race at the end.”

Closing remarks:

“I’ve talked a lot and once again I’m excited to be an Aztec. This program is ready to break out and we are going to make it happen this year. We’re going to set lofty goals for this year and we are going to drive in the direction of those goals. I will now take any questions from the media.”