

Stanford University Football Media Conference

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Stanford, California, USA

Coach David Shaw Postgame Media Conference



BYU 35, Stanford 26.

DAVID SHAW: Good morning. First of all, winning and losing always goes on the head coach. That's why they keep head coaching records. People that don't know and don't watch or don't stay up to watch don't understand this football team and the record is not who these guys are.

Out there tonight, I saw guys giving it their all, absolute all. You know, lost Walter Rouse in pregame warmups. Gutted through last week; just couldn't go today.

John Humphreys couldn't go today. We lost two more guys during the course of the game. Our team never batted an eyelash. They fought the entire time.

I couldn't be more proud. Like I said, people on the outside won't understand the connection with these guys, that they have with each other, that we have with the coaching staff. Very proud of the effort tonight.

It wasn't enough. Played a lot better this game, particularly on the offensive side. Our quarterback, as we've seen when he gets protection, he can make some throws. Guys made plays. Can't say enough about Mitch and his transformation to a true running back, picking up pass protection again today, running tough, running physical.

Defensively we just kept having guys come out and more guys go in and play, and they played hard.

But credit to BYU for making more plays than we did.

Just informed the team that I just coached my last game at Stanford. It's been a great 16 years. It really has.

It took a while to get up here because I basically had to hug the entire football team one at a time. This is a decision that was really made this week. Two weeks ago I never would have thought we'd be having this conversation right now. But really, the last three, four days, a lot of prayer, conversations with my wife, Kori, and this one phrase just kept coming to me: It's time. It's time.

This program is in a better position than it looks. The transfer portal will be very, very enticing to a lot of people. There are programs that are already illegally back door recruiting; have been doing it for months. I hope a lot of these guys stay. We'll have guys leave for the NFL, we'll have guys graduate, and we'll have a couple of the older guys make other decisions.

But I think the core of this football team can be very, very good. Can be very good. You saw a lot of them playing out there this year, some as true freshmen, some as sophomores, a lot of really good football players.

Excited to see what they can do in the future. Excited about the conversations that we've had on campus with our administration, with the athletic director Bernard Muir, finding ways to utilize the transfer portal the Stanford way. You have to be active in the transfer portal nowadays to be competitive. Proud of our president, President Tessier-Lavigne, being open to that, conversations with Rick Shaw, dean of admissions, and open to it and finding a way to do it.

We've talked about NIL. We've talked about a lot of things, working to continue to improve our game-day experience here at Stanford. So really proud of those things, those conversations, those initiatives. Proud of the guys we have here. We're not that far away. I'm still saying we. We are not that far away.

That being said, as of right now, there's no desire for me to go coach another team. That's not what this is about. I'm going to spend a lot more time with my family. Got some other things I would love to do. But excited to be home a little bit more, help around a little bit more, then sometime in the future we'll decide what the next opportunity is.

But for now, couldn't be more grateful to the Stanford community, all the players, all the staff and faculty, the other coaches. Just walking around our building, our building is a Hall of Fame. We've got Hall of Fame coaches in every sport, left and right. It's just so exciting to be with that group, and I appreciate that group. Appreciate my family for putting up with this ridiculous profession for a

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

long time.

Really looking forward to watching this team. Looking forward to spending time at home. We'll really see what's next.

I'll open it up for questions.

Q. What was the final straw for you making this decision? What kind of pushed you over -- you said you made it a couple days ago.

DAVID SHAW: I'm not going to accept the premise of the question. There's no final straw. There's no pushing over the edge. I think most of you know, like I don't come up here and make things up. I don't come up here to mislead you all. I come up here and am pretty straightforward, and I'll continue to do that. And what I told you is the honest truth.

A week ago I wasn't here. Off-season plans, what we're doing, who we're recruiting, how we're going forward. Really was less than a week, and as I sat before Thanksgiving and on Thanksgiving and I prayed about it and I thought about it, I talked to my wife about it, and with every hour it seemed, before Thanksgiving, on Thanksgiving, it even was more cemented in my head. And God's honest truth, that was the phrase that kept coming to me was, it's time.

It's been great. It's been a great run. There are a lot of people that think this program is down. That's what our record says. But I look at the components. I look at the people here, the support that I'm hearing coming from our athletic director, from our university president, the people that are behind the scenes. We're not that far away.

But once again, a week ago, 10 days ago, I was gung-ho to be the person to lead us there, and over the last few days I realized it was time. It was time for me to step aside, time for the next group to come in, and hopefully whoever they hire next wins more games than I do. That would be awesome. I would love that.

Q. Could you touch on the difficulties of adjusting with the evolution of college football and how it changed throughout your career?

DAVID SHAW: Once again, I'll be honest. I'm not going to sidestep the question. It's been difficult, but it's been difficult on everybody. Stanford historically doesn't change quickly. We are methodical. We don't want to change and then change and then change. If we're going to make a change, we're going to look at it, we're going to measure twice and cut once and make sure we're doing the right

thing for the university, the right thing for our students, the right thing for our student-athletes, the right thing for our programs.

There's been a lot of change, and particularly the last two years, two and a half years. Like I said, I've been proud of where these conversations have gone to be competitive in the new landscape. It's been a whirlwind. There are a lot of coaches right now on a lot of teams that are doing really well and going to bowl games, and talked to a lot of guys, and many of them have no idea what's going to happen in the next six months. The words roster management used to mean something for us. Right now, nobody knows what that means. I mean, yeah, you've heard Nick Saban complain about it. You've heard Kirby Smart complain about it. You've heard everybody complain about it. No one knows what's going to happen on their teams in the next six months.

So as slowly as Stanford has changed, we're trying to do it the right way. But everybody in college sports right now, in particular football, college football, a little antsy. The combination of NIL and then the illegal pay for play that people are calling NIL and the transfer portal is a really, really interesting combination that everyone is dealing with.

Q. Just to follow up, is there anything that you personally would like or looking back would have changed sooner maybe just to kind of combat -- not that you knew what the future was because none of us do.

DAVID SHAW: Yeah, no. That's not how I'm wired. I'm a windshield guy. I'm not a rear view mirror guy. What's best is prologue: Shakespeare. But what's past is behind us, and all you can do is learn from it and grow from it. Talking about changing it, it's a waste of time. I don't like to waste time.

Q. How much of your decision is about the things you're talking about now, it's just a much different sport that you're trying to coach in now, and how much of it is just the performance hasn't been what you wanted it to be the last few years?

DAVID SHAW: It doesn't have to be either one of those. I would be wrong to say that to some degree those played into it, but those weren't the main things. The main thing is what I said. Many of you in this room, I recognize some of you that have covered the sport for a while. Head coaching years I think are only second to president years, right? One year is like five. My first nine, honestly, were -- there was a lot of success. It was still hard. Those were long years.

I grew up in the NFL really before I came to college. I was in the NFL two years out of college and nine years in the NFL. The one thing about the NFL is that when the season is over, the season is over. My wife and I would talk, sometimes I could just get -- she would say, you've got time, and I would just sleep. I would just sleep for days. Just days. Then she would say, are you here yet? I would say, no, not yet.

A couple days later she would say, are you back? I'd say, I'm back, and she'd say, I've got a list of things for you to do, because we had an off-season. There's no such thing as an off-season in college football. College coaches, and thankfully there's some common sense in the last six months where we put a dead period in after this last week, because otherwise coaches would be on the road tomorrow or Monday.

As it is right now, we're going to be on the road on Friday. For some it's Friday it's on the road, come back, bowl game, get a couple days off, on the road again, come back, get ready for spring football, and the next break you get is spring break.

16 years of running a program, 16 years of being responsible for everything and everybody catches up to you. I'm not burnt out by any stretch of the imagination. I'm healthy and feel good. But at the same time, 16 years is a long time -- 12 as a head coach, 16 here. I'm so proud of our accomplishments, so proud of our student-athletes, so proud of the guys that have done gone on and done other things in the NFL and outside of the NFL in different walks of life.

But like I said, the phrase just kept coming back to me that gave me peace, which was, it's time.

Q. Any possibility of you working with Stanford athletics in any other capacity? Are there any roles you'd be interested in filling in the future? How do you plan to stay tied to this university that's meant so much to you even though you're no longer in this head coaching capacity?

DAVID SHAW: Well, I'll still continue to give to the Buck/Cardinal club, and I'll be around. Got a great relationship with Bernard Muir, and if he ever needs anything from me, would absolutely love to -- I don't know about a specific role or true capacity. That sounds like employment right now. I'm kind of anti-employment for a little bit.

But I love this place. I love what it stands for. I love how we do what we do. I love the people that are here. This is the place that nurtures and develops people to go out and

change the world. Andrew Luck, he and I were going to a big game function last Thursday. We were just standing outside with Mr. Muir and just looking around, and he just said, I love this place. There's an energy here. There's a desire here to do things, to do special things, the collaboration in every field is special.

I'm an alum. I'm proud of this place. I love this place. Don't plan on moving anytime soon. Kids appreciate that.

But yeah, I don't see a specific role necessarily, but I have so many close relationships here, staff, coaches of other sports. It's one of my favorite things to do, many of you have seen me, is to go to Stanford sporting events. I'm excited to watch our basketballs and volleyballs and soccers. Real excited about the up coming lacrosse season, baseball, softball, tennis. This is a special place. I'll be around.

Q. What will you miss about this job? Obviously it's meant a lot to you and you've done it for so long.

DAVID SHAW: Yeah, that's the easy part. It's people. I just talked about it. This place attracts special people. It took me so long to come up here because here's a three-win team who is just in tears and appreciative of not just me, but what the staff has done with these young men.

Yeah, that was probably the hardest part about the decision. I love going to work every single day. I say this and I've said this at this podium before, certain places that you work and certain people that you work with sometimes that you get to the door and you grab the door handle and you go, okay, here we go, and you walk in. Never happened here in 12 years. Hadn't happened. Just walk in the door every single day, love the staff, both coaches and non-coaches. Love this team, the guys, the personalities, the intelligence, the silliness.

That was the hardest part about this decision, is there were some young players on this team that I really, really wanted to coach. Really, really wanted to finish their arc. Every player has an arc. There's some young guys on this team, especially in the freshmen and sophomore classes that haven't even scratched the surface yet that I think are going to be special.

That was the hard part. But at the same time, it was time.

Q. Do you believe with the changes that are going on in college football, do you believe Stanford can get back to the level that you guys were at in 2010, 2015, '16, '17 range?

DAVID SHAW: Yes.



Q. What will it take to do that?

DAVID SHAW: Growth. And it's not going to be immediate. We've proven that we can recruit at a high level here. We had the best class in the Pac-12 last year after a three-win season. The last decade you could say arguably if we're top two or three in our conference with our academic -- I don't use the word restrictions -- academic standards, and now we may not need 25 or 30 guys from the portal.

Might be the right five. Recruit at a high level as we have, add to the team. If we could have added one more running back, added one more interior defensive lineman, added one more offensive lineman for our depth and a couple other key positions, boy, who knows what would have happened. If we'd have kept our running backs healthy, I firmly believe we'd be going to a bowl game.

But if you can recruit at a high level and add to your team with the right group of players, yeah, we can go compete.

Q. Have you had some time to reflect this week in what are going to be some of the top moments and wins and other things you're going to remember most fondly about the 16 years?

DAVID SHAW: Boy, there's so many. So many. Even a couple in the last few years. I talked to the guys again today about moments. You play this game because you love it. You play this game because you want to win. You play this game because you want to be great, but you also play this game because you can create moments in this sport that you can't create doing anything else.

The moment that we created at Notre Dame this year, special. Those guys are going to remember that forever. National TV, underdogs, winning at Notre Dame. A really good Notre Dame team that people are seeing how good that team is, winning the game, and really controlled the game.

The entire COVID year. If we didn't have Stanford guys on this team, we would have folded. Didn't fold. Got an erroneous positive test. Well, nobody has still been able to tell me exactly what happened, so our quarterback can't play the first game against Oregon. Gets cleared after never really testing positive ever because that test disappeared, and then gets turned loose on Thursday, so misses an entire week of practice.

We go 0-2 with all the COVID stuff and we get kicked out of the county, get kicked out of the state basically, then go on a four-game win streak. It was magical. Insane but

magical.

Pac-12 Championships, Rose Bowl wins, somebody -- I forget all these things, the numbers, but the number of wins against top 10 teams, big-time games, big-time players, coaching a couple college football Hall-of-Famers, coaching a couple guys that I believe will be NFL Hall-of-Famers, too. Coaching a bunch of guys that have gone on to start their own companies.

Multiple guys are doctors now. (Indiscernible) is working down the street as a doctor. There's too many -- I'm just rattling off the top of my head, but there are too many to put in one box, but that's what's special about being here, is you're going to have special players, special human beings. They're going to do great things in the sport and great things outside the sport.

Q. You're very loyal to your assistants and staff members; do you think that maybe there could have been an opportunity to change things along the way even if it was --

DAVID SHAW: Come on, man. You're going to be that guy, huh? Next question.

Q. I was going to ask about the assistants, but in a different way. Talk about how much are you going to maybe miss working with guys like Pritchard, guys like Lance Anderson, these guys you've worked with for so long? How much are you going to miss days where you're scheming stuff with them, talking stuff, planning? How much are you going to miss -- you'll still see them, but different relationship now. How much are you going to miss those connections?

DAVID SHAW: Yeah, that's one of the hardest parts, is that you spend more time preparing than you actually spend time coaching, and watching hours and hours of film and debating and discussing and trying to improve and trying to be better and looking at what you did right, looking at what you did wrong. Those are just great conversations.

That's part of what's really fun about being with the right group of people. Some people believe if you don't have the right record then you have to change those people, but a lot of those people on the staff have National Championship rings. A lot of people on this staff have Pac 12 Championship rings. A lot of people on this staff have coached guys in this building, in this conference that have broken records. I'm not saying this is me, but during 12 years here, we've broken records in every phase of the game: rushing records, passing records, sack records, turnover records, passing, passing defense, field goal distance, return yardage.



We've had two national returners of the year here, should have been three, but they didn't have the award when Chris Owusu was here because he would have won the award, also.

That staff that enjoyed working with every single day, accomplished a lot here.

Q. Is there one word you can use to describe your time here?

DAVID SHAW: Let me mull over that a little bit.

Q. What was Bernard Muir's reaction when you told him? What kind of reaction did he have?

DAVID SHAW: I'll keep that private. Bernard and I have worked really well together over the years and it was a good discussion. It was a good discussion.

Q. Who would you like to see take your place in this role or what kind of person maybe?

DAVID SHAW: I'll keep that to myself, also. Mr. Muir is going to have a lot of people raising their hand for this job. I'll lend any advice I can, but I also trust his process that he'll go through to pick the right leader for this locker room of leaders. That's a big part about being here is you're not just leading people, you're leading a locker room full of future leaders.

As I said earlier, you look at the roster of coaches in this athletic department, it's a special group. You've got to find the right person to come in and lead our football team.

Let me get back to you on that one. We'll have a press conference at some point this week, we'll announce, but yeah, summing up my time here in one word is a tough one. It's a tough one. A lot of great accomplishments, a lot of great people, a lot of great moments that nobody saw.

The influence that my coaches, my staff and myself had on our young people is probably the thing I'm going to be the most proud of, the adults that we turned out of this place and poured into society. Paulson Adebo was here tonight. He's here with the Saints and they play the 49ers tomorrow, and just to see him come by and hug all the coaches and thank us for preparing him for the NFL but then also life, and that's one thing I think this entire staff can be very, very proud of.

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