

USC Football



Pete Carroll

Head Coach

**University of
Southern California**

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Well, good morning. It has been a long time since I have been to the convention. I have never seen something so big. I feel like I'm in the CIA with people following me around and taking care of me. It is awful fun to be here. I want to start off by thanking those three guys that voted for USC. I really appreciate it. Look, there are thousands of guys here and I have got three that voted for us. I guess that is telling.

We had a remarkable season and a lot of fun. It has been a fun three years. It has been an experience the last couple of weeks dealing with the BCS and the end of the football season. It was a real interesting opportunity for us to be challenged by the way things are, then it is nothing like you thought it would be. Our football team was resilient in figuring out that we could win the national championship and not play in the BCS game. We found that we were going to play in the Rose Bowl with the chance to be the No. 1 team in the country. We were very excited about that opportunity, and it played out well for us. I am real proud of that. I think it's poignant to make the statement that there was a great game played in New Orleans and a great match-up between two terrific football teams. Somebody had to lose, and somebody had to win. Nick Saban's team at LSU played a fantastic football game and were first-class in the way they went about it. We are just as excited about them doing what they did as we were about what we accomplished. We share the spotlight of the BCS controversy, but maybe there will be some changes that occur that will effectively adjust the BCS. I am the last one to gripe about it. I have no idea how the thing works, and I still don't. I had a chance to be one of the voters for the BCS. Can you imagine how confused I would have been if I had to vote in that thing? It was confusing as heck for us. Hopefully things will get better and we will be part of that process.

A great deal has happened in our three years at USC. It was a storied program for years and one that drew a lot of media attention being in Los Angeles. A lot of stuff has happened in our effort to try and get this thing going again. It has been a fun process.

In year one, I think we accomplished some basic things. It was a frustrating season for us because we played so poorly. We were just a lousy football team through

half the football season. Halfway through it, we started to get something going. We started to get a sense for the kind of philosophy that we wanted to present in our program. We rallied and got the season going in a positive direction during the final few games. We really didn't achieve that much.

In year two, we underwent major changes offensively from one year to the next. We revamped everything that we were doing and tried to tailor it to the people that we had, the coaches that we had and the philosophies that we felt were important to us. We went out strong right from the beginning of the season and saw our team start to execute and do things like you would like to see it. We looked like we were sharp, quicker and more precise about the things we were doing. We put together a season that allowed the Heisman Trophy winner, Carson Palmer, to emerge. We finished with a tremendous win in the Orange Bowl. We made positive movement in a good direction. We lost a bunch of guys that had been really critical to our upsurge. They had been through enough pain that they would do anything to try and get USC football back to its winning ways. Those seniors were so important to us that when they left we thought, "We don't know what's going to happen next."

We began year three with an off-season conditioning program. Our players were working hard, and they were kind of enjoying it. We thought maybe, just maybe we could have something special going again. By the time we got to spring football, our guys were practicing hard, and it felt the same. They had the same work ethic, the same competitiveness on the practice field and the same kind of feeling we had had the year before. We thought, "Just maybe we have a chance to have a good football team."

We had a lot of guys coming back on defense, but we had a couple of huge question marks. What we were most fortunate to find out as we went through the process of summertime and fall camp is that we had some really talented kids coming in on a terrific recruiting class. We had a quarterback that had never thrown a ball in a game. At the last day of spring practice, we said if we are going to start a game today, Matt Leinart would be the guy. He wasn't throwing the ball real well, but we just felt the best about him. As it turns out, the guy comes back and embraces this

opportunity and goes wild. He played great football for us and wound up putting together a season that was comparable to the guy who won the Heisman Trophy. It shocked us some, but obviously, we loved it and were having fun with it.

Well, the other emergence was in the runningback position. We had one guy coming back who had carried the ball 40 times the year before. We had no other runningbacks in the program. He was the elder statesman as a sophomore. So we had three freshmen that were battling for the spot, and out of that came some terrific players like LenDale White and Reggie Bush. We had a runningback position that was filled up. We built on the first and second year struggles to where the third year, we just got a little bit better and had the chance to play for a national championship.

We are very proud and fortunate to be here. I want to make sure and let you know that you've got to have some good fortune along the way, which we did. Our young kids came through. Without them, we never would have been able to win a share of the national championship. To get it done, a lot of people have to do their part. We have an administration led by a guy named Mike Garrett, who was a great runningback and is a great athletic director. He cleared the path for us to do what we wanted to do and gave us every opportunity to think freely, experiment and take chances along the way. He let me hire the guys I wanted to hire and treats them the way we wanted them to be treated. Those guys have come through in a big way.

The first guy I will tell you about is a guy named Ed Orgeron. Eddie's been around college football for a number of years. He is my assistant head coach, and he is a perfect right-hand guy. He drives his players as much as anybody in this room. He has got a great sense of USC because he has been there longer than most of us. And Eddie is the recruiting coordinator and guides the whole thing. He knows the principle of what we are all about. Without him, it would not have worked. You all know about Norm Chow and all the success that he has had. You know, Norm did it again. Steve Sarkisian took Matt Leinart from a guy who was throwing wobble balls, to a guy throwing darts with the football. Greg Burns and Lane Kiffin are both here. Those guys did a fantastic job of bringing this all together. It takes so many people to make it happen and I am just so grateful that our

guys worked so hard. One other guy I want to mention is Chris Carlisle, who has just been so instrumental in our program. You guys know how important your strength and conditioning people are. Well, Chris Carlisle is the heart and soul of this team. He is the heartbeat of our program. He coaches our guys a whole lot more than we do. He gets them through the off-season and summertime and does an extraordinary job. He has taught our football team how to finish. We finish well in games and we finish the season well. We are all proud and humbled by our success. I think you will see that in the way our football players handle the success. We also want to do it with style and in a fashion that makes you feel good about USC.

Obviously, we get to cash in a little bit recruiting-wise. When you do well and get the notoriety, you have a chance to get those great kids. We are going for the best guys we can find in the country. If we keep working hard, we have a chance to continue with some of the success that we have had. I am just glad to be a part of it.

When I was coaching at New England, we went into Buffalo and won a game, which we very rarely did. I took a chance after the game was over and walked out on the field, which I often like to do. I was hanging out there waiting for the bus to get ready to go. I saw at the end of their stadium, they hung their banners of division and conference championships. There was a streak when Marv Levy was coach where they won year in and year out. God bless Marv, but he never did win the Super Bowl. He was there four times. We had battled for years and it struck me for the first time about what is really important to me in coaching. It is about being a winner on a consistent basis and being successful over a long period of time. I just sat back and admired what he had done. That to me is more important than winning one time or doing something great at a single event.

We had a hard time in the NFL. Now, I loved coaching in the NFL. I was there for 16 years. I loved the competition. I loved the level of resources that back your efforts, the big games, the match-ups, the great players and the coaches. It was awesome being in that league, but there is an aspect of it that is different than what it is in college. Every year, they try to make it even. They do everything they can to bring you back to 8-8 and let the next team win. They make it hard for you to do what Marv

Levy had done in those years. Your hat has got to go off to the guy, because it is so difficult to buck the system and win on a regular basis. When I look at what we have here in college football and the opportunities that we have at USC, I am thankful. We have got a great setting to bring kids to and there isn't anybody holding us back. In that, I found a place that I am so proud to be a part of.

I am so excited to be a college football coach. It's with great joy that I am here with you guys to be a part of this. I found a home and a place that we can do the things that we want in the manner in which we want to do them. There is a different level of tolerance, and a different level of scrutiny that is much more wholesome for me and the people that I am around.

What I would like to share with you today is a little bit about our program and how we look at things. I want you to know how we go about our business, and give you a sense of what we are all about. What are our philosophies or beliefs? I like to think of it in terms of a whole series of beliefs. You have a list of everything that you undertake as a coach. You have an opportunity to make a choice on what you feel about that and what you believe about that. To me, that is what generates the guidelines of how we are going to go ahead and operate. It is the kind of thought that keeps us up late at night and doesn't let you think about Christmas when you're sitting there in front of the tree. You know, beliefs about style of offense or defense. Are you going to be a leading defense or a tackling defense? We have come to a point where we make a decision, "This is what we feel about this." Then you have a sense of how to create and recreate it. Whether it is your off-season training program or how you let your guys handle the training table, it is everything. The more you can come to the point where you make a conscious decision of how you believe about something, the clearer your message is going to be when you carry out your program. From that comes the philosophy of your entire program.

It is about a series of beliefs. For instance, everything that we do is competition. Everything is about competing. I want that to come through our program in all areas with the sense that we are always competing to do things a little bit better. That is an aspect of our theory, of how we approach our business that gives us a

sense of we are always trying to do it better than it's been done before. The essence of that thought guides us when we are having a camp or a clinic. Now, this drives you crazy because you can't ever be satisfied, but it is a motivator. It is something that keeps you directed on always working towards improving.

I love the thought of talking about competition all the time. I read a book about Anson Dorrance, who is the women's soccer coach at the University of North Carolina. He is one of the winningest coaches that has ever been around. He has won numerous national championships. He inspired me a few years back with some thoughts that he had extracted from Dean Smith, who was the men's basketball coach at North Carolina. It was about creating a competitive cauldron on your practice field. Making it so highly competitive that your players have to perform every single day. They have got to work at it every day. They have got to win or lose every day and they get graded on winning or losing. It is pointed out whether they won or lost, which makes them develop the attitude that everything is important and has a bearing on how you are going to grow and become down the road. It is absolutely running rampant in our program, this whole thought about competition.

To find a philosophy or a theme that you can be successful at, it has got to fit you. You have to figure that out. For me, this has become real easy because I think of my whole life as a competition now. I don't want to back off feeling like I am too competitive, or think that it is a bad thing. I think being competitive is a good thing, but don't stick it in somebody's face. To be competitive is to be motivated and to be driven. I have never been more driven at any time in my coaching career than I am right now. It is something that I am excited about and I can't wait to see where I can push this program to be more successful down the road. The point about this is, if you are coaching your position or you are a coordinator, you need to ask yourself, "What do I feel about this? What do I think about this screen or pulling guards in our offense or bump-and-run, man-to-man coverage or a two coverage?" If you don't answer that question, then you haven't done anything. You have got to go to the next step and then come up with an answer about what you feel. Once you do that, then you make a statement about what is for you. You have to go



Pete Carroll at a Glance

Experience: Graduate Asst., Pacific, 1974-76; Secondary Coach, Arkansas, 1977; Secondary Coach, Iowa State, 1978; Secondary Coach, Ohio State, 1979; Defensive Coordinator/Secondary, NC State, 1980-82; Asst. Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator, Pacific, 1983; Defensive Backs Coach, Buffalo Bills, 1984; Defensive Backs Coach, Minnesota Vikings, 1985-89; Defensive Coordinator, New York Jets, 1990-93; Head Coach, New York Jets, 1994; Defensive Coordinator, San Francisco 49ers, 1995-96; Head Coach, New England Patriots, 1997-99; Head Coach, USC, 2001-present.

Collegiate Head Coaching Record: 29-9

Notes: Pete Carroll was named the 2003 AFCA Division I-National Coach of the Year after leading USC to a 12-1 mark, their second straight Pac-10 Conference championship and a share of the national championship ... Carroll was also named AFCA Regional Coach of the Year in 2003 for Region 5.

about the next step, which is trying to live with that decision, and see if you can continue to support it and make it work for you.

I really believe that there are a lot of guys sitting in this room right now that haven't done that in every aspect of what you are doing. Maybe you have and maybe you haven't, but I know I didn't do it until a handful of years ago. It makes things so much more clear for me. I am much more clear about what I think about what is coming up next, how I am going to deal with situations or how I am going to deal with the media. It is about getting ready for stuff by figuring out what you feel about the world around you and then trying to create how you want it to be. I will give you an example of that. To me, one of the base moments that helped us create our program is when I worked at trying to picture what I want our football team to look like on game day or what message is going to come through the effort of our football team if you are sitting up in the stands and you know something about football. With that vision of what it is supposed to be like for me, then I have a chance to create it. If I don't think that way, then I do not have a clue. How am I going to orchestrate it happening if I can't clearly picture it?

I have got three basic thoughts about that. The first one is when you watch our team play, you are going to see a team play with great effort. I couldn't live with myself unless I saw that. Anytime it shows up like it did one time during the year, I couldn't be more sick about it because it is so impor-

tant to me that you see our football team play with great effort. Now, that encompasses toughness, the way that we cover kicks or the way we take the field. We give effort in everything that we are doing. It makes me feel comfortable if that is my No. 1 issue. I have got a chance to get that done.

The No. 2 thing is that our football team plays with great enthusiasm. If your team doesn't play with great enthusiasm and doesn't capture the passion of the game every single time you go out, then there is a good chance you are not going to play your best that day. We can't allow that to happen. I guarantee that I am going to get great effort. If I guarantee that my team is going to be jacked up and have enthusiasm about what's going on, you will see a high-energy football team. I have got a chance at them being the best they can be.

The third thing is playing smart. This is important to me that when you see our football team, you see a team that makes decisions. You see a team that is disciplined. You see a team that does the right thing when they are supposed to do it. You don't see guys flying off the handle, making late hits or shoving guys in the face. You see a team that plays with a conscience. To me, that is playing smart.

If my team plays real hard, they have great passion and they do things right, we have got a chance. We have got a real chance to be pretty good. That is what I want to see. From that point, I make a declaration that the rest of my time I will go

about trying to orchestrate that happening through the way we coach, the way we teach, the way we motivate and the way we deal with our problems and our issues. Everything is about presenting that vision of how we want our football team to be. To give yourself the chance to create the vision as you see it in your mind.

I can't imagine that you can take practice lightly. Practice and the preparation for practice is as important to me as anything we do. That is our opportunity to get ourselves ready for that game day demonstration of what we are all about. So practice has got to be important. It has got to be a big deal. It has to be an event that causes our coaches to be jacked up every single day and on every single drill. In our staff meeting, one of the things I'm always doing is I am trying to get my coaches jacked. I am trying to get them ready to go to the practice field so that when they hit it, they are fired up and loud. You can't help but hear them hooting and hollering and running around to make our kids play at another level that we need at practice so they can be their best. It is totally on the coaches. It isn't the players. It's totally on the coaches. I will give you an illustration. A couple of years back, the NFL had a youth program. They were starting up this new program for junior player development for 11 to 13-year-olds. They had two experimental sessions going on, one in Brooklyn and one in the Bronx. They asked me to come by and just be part of it and see it. Well, I went to one of the practices. It was really well-organized and they had great unity. All these kids were spread out across the field, about 300. The practice was going okay, and it was really cool just to see all these young kids that had never played football, practicing. I went to the other practice session, and as I'm getting out of the car in the parking lot at JFK High School, you can hear it. You could hear practice going on. This was one of the worst-looking campuses you have ever seen in high school. As I walk to practice, there is this glorious AstroTurf practice field. Everything is set up beautifully, and you can hear this fervor of noise and enthusiasm and excitement. I wanted to see what was going on. What I picked up after walking around and watching is, the coaches were nuts. They were going crazy. They were running around. It was a crowd of 300 Hispanic and Puerto Rican kids, who had never played football and didn't know a

word they were saying. But they could feel these coaches just going berserk and frothing at the mouth. The practice was flying and I have never been the same since I saw that.

Our coaches have to jack up every single day in every phase of our work. If they can't get jacked, how can our players get jacked? They will go wherever we take them, so we have to lead them in that manner. Getting mentally prepared for practice for our coaches is part of it. Our guys don't mind it because they want to practice with great energy as well. There is a ton of noise on the practice field. If it is not noisy, it doesn't feel right. You have got to have guys yelling. You see organization. You see people moving quickly from one drill to the next. You don't see anybody standing around talking. That is what the meetings are for. That is what after practice is for. There is no down time in practice. Everybody is going the whole time. To illustrate how important it is, I always invite people to our practice. I want people to come because I want to have that sense that we are showing off for them. We are not out there very long because of it, because we practice so fast. They have got to listen fast just like I talk fast. Everybody has got to be moving all the time. If that is happening, then practice is going in the right kind of mode and the right kind of fashion.

It has got to be competitive. There has to be one-on-one, two-on-two, offense versus defense and a score kept. We keep score on first-and-ten drills. We keep score on second-and-seven drills. You have got to have a winner or a loser every day so that they are playing the game every day. There is a segment in every practice that we have our first-team offense versus our first-team defense. They are battling and competing. Keep the energy about the practice session up and have the players look forward to it. To tell you the truth, they don't mind practice at our place. They like what is going on out there. They look forward to beating on one another at the end of practice. It doesn't matter whether we are playing our archrival, a team out of our conference or a bowl game, we are doing it exactly the same, week in and week out. They have to realize that every day at practice is really important and they have got to battle. We try to revisit competition in every way we can. We keep score and show the film of who won or lost. The loser has got

to sit out there and suck it up. The winner gets to have some fun ribbing one another. I like it like that, because it keeps that energy and that competitiveness going, which is a big part of our program.

Here is another one about a thought and a belief. In our first meeting, I walk up to the podium. The first thing I do is pull out a football and say, "The philosophy of our program is all about the ball. All phases of our program, offense and defense." I have got to hold a ball when I do this because I am uncomfortable without it. It's all about the ball. If we are on offense, it's about keeping it forever until you score. You don't give it back to them until you try to punt the ball down into the corner. You don't give it back unless you just scored and you are kicking it off to them. Everything that we do, every aspect of our program, every player on offense has a responsibility about the football because it could be the snapper. It could be the guard and pass protection. It could be the left tackle. It could be the fullback or tailback carrying the ball. The tight end or receiver catching the ball. Everybody has got an aspect that they are totally responsible for the football.

On defense, we don't play defense to stop you or to go three and out. We play defense to get the football back. We are out there every snap to get the football. On special teams, every aspect of it. It is the biggest play in the game because so many yards are exchanged and the ball is up in the air for so long. There are so many opportunities for the ball to go right or wrong. We have to have a tremendous conscience about the football.

Now, let me give you an illustration of a belief. If you take one single element out of football, it is about turnovers. I am not trying to reinvent anything here at all. It is about how deep your belief is and how far you are willing to go to promote what your beliefs are. Let me tell you this, I don't think there is anybody in college football or in the NFL that emphasizes this more than I do. Why I am proud to tell you that is if you take a look at the three years we have been at USC, we are plus-52 in turnover margin. Imagine what a positive aspect that is for your program. We were plus-20 this year. To me, that is the trophy. Now, the reason I want to make this point is last year, the Green Bay Packers and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers were one-two in turnover ratio. All right? That is Ed Donatell coaching on the defense with the Packers and Monte

Kiffin coaching the defense with the Bucs. This year in the NFL, take a look at who led the NFL in turnover ratio, the Kansas City Chiefs. That is Greg Robinson coaching the defense at that place. What I'm telling you is the guys that were altogether coaching defense at the Jets, were Monte Kiffin, Ed Donatell, Greg Robinson and myself. There was a time when we decided that if you go for it and you emphasize it better than anybody else, you can be more successful at it. Even if you are not, at least you are going to be better than you were if you didn't emphasize it really well.

Emphasis is the number one thing we talk about. The three years we have been at USC, I bet there is nobody in the country that had a plus-52 turnover ratio after three years. That is about emphasizing something that you believe in and finding creative ways to keep coming back to it. There are a million ways that we emphasize the football. When you are talking turnover ratio, it is not just about getting the ball, it is about keeping it as well. If you've got a strong belief and you go for it, you can make it happen. Our coaches have to back it up and they've got to believe in it. You can do it. Shoot, look at all the guys that were with the Jets doing it. That is just guys going for it and believing in it.

What I am trying to drive home is how important it is to make conscious decisions about what you believe. Once you do that, you act on it. If you start acting on it, you are going to find out whether it fits you or not. If it doesn't fit you, you won't emphasize it very well and you will leave it out there. How many guys in this room have said, "We are going to be the best pursuing football team in our conference"? You have all said that, but did you act on it? Did you do the things that you needed to do to get that done? How many of you guys were going to be the most prolific finishers on the offensive line? Did you finish with that thought every day in a way that made your players carry it out? They will do exactly what we let them do. If you emphasize the things that are true to your heart properly and consistently, it will happen. You may not even win all your games, but at least you will have a real strong belief in what you are all about. I don't know how to emphasize that enough, but I think it has been so central to what has happened for us at USC. I have never felt so comfortable with how I see the game at this time. I have done a better job of getting what I want. It

is becoming more true than ever before. It goes back to the principle of finding out what your beliefs are, working at it, making them happen and staying with it.

Let me give you an example. I was fortunate enough that when I went to Arkansas as a graduate assistant, Monte Kiffin was the defensive coordinator. He had come from Nebraska, where he had won a couple of national championships. I learned about what eagle defense was. It later became shade defense, but it was always the same principle. My whole career in coaching defense has always been about coaching the shade defense. I have never been a three-four guy or a four-three guy. I have only been an under-defense guy. I had no idea how much this was going to help way back when, when we were faced with the decision, "Should we change because we are crappy? Should we do what Miami's doing?" I didn't realize it at the time, but what has happened has just been years of staying with the same belief system, working at it, developing it and becoming an expert at what you believe and what you feel about your defense. It is so much more important to do that than to come up with another system that you think is a little bit better. If you are thinking you are going to improve your defense, don't go to a different one. Make the one that you have got the best you can make it. That is where you can find your special aspect of your coaching.

I was with Monte, then I coached for him. When Earle Bruce hired us at Ohio State, he wanted to coach Monte Kiffin's defense, and we did that. It was easy to coach Monte Kiffin's defense when he was the head coach at N.C. State. We came together again at Minnesota years later with a guy named Floyd Peters, who was an under-defense guy his whole career. We brought all of those years of experience together and out came this marvelous thought of a defense. Because all of those guys brought their beliefs together and from that grew an even stronger belief.

I think the creative part of this is really important. I think finding out the different ways that you can come back to your team is really important. Here is what I am saying. It isn't about one great speech of what you feel, it is how many times you can continue to come back to the themes that you believe in in ways that surprise your players. Hit them from a different angle that gives them another opportunity to see it

from a different view of what you are trying to get across. I think you have got to be creative. You have got to find ways to capture them in what you believe. I will give you an example, but I don't do it anymore because in our conference we have the Oregon State Beavers. If we didn't, the USC Trojans would be hearing about beavers day in and day out. How many of you guys know that the beaver is the most diligent-working animal in the animal kingdom? Everybody know that? No, you don't know that. The beaver is the most diligent worker in the animal kingdom. Well, we thought if we could give out an award on a regular basis about who could be the most diligent worker by attempting to force turnovers, we would be on track. Well, think how convoluted and weird that is. If we could just get the point across to our players, "If you just keep trying to get the ball out, we are going to get better." So we built this thing up about the beaver. Who is going to be the beaver of the day, beaver of the week and beaver of the year? Because as stupid as that sounds, it gave us some weird way to make our players understand that this awareness needs to be on a regular basis.

Now, that's not the most ingenious way to go about doing this. That was just one way to do it. You have got to find your own ways to champion the cause. Watch yourself because if you don't keep coming back to the same things, you really don't believe in what you are talking about. If it isn't something that you feel in your heart, you are not going to convey it. Another way of looking at it, if you are a defensive coordinator and you believe in chasing the football, that is really paramount to how your football team is going to play. If your head coach doesn't believe in that, it ain't going to happen. It will eventually get watered-down and you won't be able to get the emphasis that you want. If you are a linebacker coach and you believe in pursuit, you can't get the whole defense to pursue that. You won't get it done unless the coordinator follows that lead and the head coach follows that lead. The message is not going to get across unless you have got this wonderful support system and a consistent opportunity to keep coming back to what you believe in. It is an interesting process. It is fun to figure out what you are all about. You may think you know, but until you actually write it down or talk about it with somebody else and then go about the

process of recreating it, you are not going to really find out what you feel about stuff.

I think the creative approach is really important. That is why film is so important. Illustrating what other teams do or what great players do so you can sell kids on what you want. It can also sell you what you don't want, obviously. There is a lot of stuff going on there that we are not proud of, but anyway that you can come about it, it's important. It is getting players to talk the language and act out that language in the context that you want.

I wanted to finalize one of the major aspects of how we think. We have captured the belief that great players and great teams play with great confidence. That is not the first time you have ever heard that. They do that because they have learned through their careers as players that they can trust their ability to come through when they need to. They can trust their ability to match the situation and be successful. They think that they are going to do the right thing and they are going to win and come through. I think that is one of the most important guidelines that I have as a head coach, position coach or as a coordinator. That is not earth-shattering, but when you understand that thought, then everything you do is to develop a process of making your players confident. It is how you can show them what they do know. That is a guideline for us in the way that we approach our football team.

I will give you an example. We came off the practice field after the first spring game that we had at USC. I am standing in line with Carson Palmer at a barbecue. I said, "Don't you ever go to that thought again." He was expecting to screw up. He thought

it was normal for him to make mistakes in the critical time and screw it up. I said, "Never think that way. I don't want to ever hear you talk like that. We're never going to allow those words to come out of your mouth again." Because think what is going to happen in the fourth quarter. One ball might be thrown right to the corner for a touchdown and another might go right to a linebacker for a horrible interception. Well, there's no wonder because he has figured it is going to happen. He had no confidence. He thought he was going to screw it up. So the words that we use, the message that we send is all about instilling the belief that they can get it done. Whatever that takes with your individual player or the coach that is coaching them, make the coach understand that he has got the belief system and confidence to get the message across to the player.

What does that mean? Well, it means that you, as coaches, are in charge of orchestrating this process towards this great trusting football player or football team so that when they play, they know they are going to win. It has been stuck in their face and pointed out to them every way you can point it out. Show them in the film how good they are. Show them in the film of the catch that the guy made or of the block that the guy made. Don't keep showing them what they can't do or what they don't know how to do because that is what is going to be in their head. Let them only focus on what they can become. In that process, you can't rip a player and leave them sitting there. We rip guys, but we come back around and find a way to make sure that it isn't left that way. If they leave with the thought that they are capable, they

feel good about what they are doing. They are hopeful, not hopeless. They are hopeful that they will be able to create it and recreate it, and what comes from that is a sense of, "I know I can do this." When you think that way, you give people a chance to be really good. I think you give them a chance to be better than they ever thought they could be because you extended how far they can go. You don't let them set the limits, you set the limits.

I will give you an example again. When freshmen come to our program, we don't talk about red-shirting anybody. Every one of those guys has got to come in to play right now. That is the way we talk to them. That is the way we recruit them and that is what we believe. If we don't do that and think, "Oh, he may play as a junior," then we convey that message to him, what do you think he is going to do? He is going to live up to your expectations, but if you take him beyond where he thinks he can go, maybe he goes a little farther than he might have gone otherwise. In that, I think you are doing that player and yourself a service. There is nothing too far out there for you to reach for. It comes back to instilling the kind of confidence, the kind of trust that lets your team know that they are going to win on game day. It doesn't matter where you play, what color uniforms they have got or the history of their program. If they know it, it doesn't matter what is going on outside. I think it is what gives you a chance to play in any kind of setting.

Well, that is all I have got for you today. It was an awesome opportunity to be here. We have had a wonderful year, but more important, it is great to be a college coach. Thank you.

AFCA Divisions

It is important to know the AFCA Division and District in which your school belongs. Following are the four AFCA Divisions:

University Division I-A — Institutions that are in NCAA Division I-A

University Division I-AA — Institutions that are in NCAA Division I-AA

University Division II — Institutions that are in NCAA Division II and the NAIA

University Division III — Institutions that are in NCAA Division III