

Baylor University Football Media Conference

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Waco, Texas

Dave Aranda Mack Rhoades Dr. Linda Livingstone Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: It's an exciting day for Baylor University and Baylor athletics and for Baylor football. And as we continue, let me introduce to you the president of Baylor University, President Linda Livingstone.

LINDA LIVINGSTONE: Thank you so much. It's wonderful to see all of you here. We're thrilled to be here for this special announcement today. John, thank you for the introduction and also congratulations on your recent recognition as Texas Sportscaster of the Year.

Today is a very special day in the life of Baylor and in the community of Waco. And certainly that's in part because we get to introduce our new football coach. But we're also today celebrating and remembering the life of Reverend Martin Luther King and the indelible legacy he left on our country. Reverend King once said, "Faith is taking the first step even when you can't see the whole staircase."

We are so thankful to Coach Aranda, his wife Dione and children Jaelyn, Jordyn and Ronin for taking a step of faith to join us as we venture up the staircase that is Baylor's future together.

Athletics and football, in particular, have been an important part of the university for many, many years, an important part of that journey. In fact, the very first location for a football field on this campus was Carroll Field, which was right in the heart of campus, where the Bill Daniel Student Center stands today. And today if you ask students why they chose to come to Baylor, they'll tell you there are three main reasons: First, that we focus on academic excellence within the context of a Christian learning environment; second, that we're a middle-sized university; and, third, that we play big-time athletics.



And I think that's something we're doing really well right now at Baylor. (Applause).

And as we continue our path to becoming a Tier 1 Christian research university as outlined in our strategic plan Illuminate, excellence in athletics is actually encompassed in the fourth pillar of that strategic plan where we speak to wanting to have nationally recognized programs in the arts and in athletics. So I am thrilled that we have found a new coach who shares in this commitment to excellence.

I have to tell you I've also enjoyed reading some of the comments people have written about him on social media. They've described him as cerebral, a philosopher, a student, a ninja -- I need a little more explanation on that one -- (laughter) and a genius. So, Coach, I think you'll fit in really well here on our campus.

And after meeting with Coach Aranda I know that he's completely deeply committed to Baylor's Christian mission and developing champions for life.

Coach Aranda, we welcome you and Dione, Jaelyn, Jordyn and Ronin to Baylor. Know that the Baylor family is here to support you work with you. And we look forward to what the future holds.

And to Mack Rhoades, our vice president and director of athletics. I think Mack must be the ninja of coaching searches. What a thorough, professional and confidential search you conducted. Thank you, Mack, for your commitment to Baylor, our distinct role in higher education, and the holistic development of our student-athletes.

It's an exciting time to be at Baylor. We have a bright future ahead. So we're excited to add the Aranda family to that community and look forward to what is ahead. Sic-em, Bears. (Applause).

THE MODERATOR: President Livingstone, thank you for your leadership of Baylor University. You stole my line. So let me just turn it over now to the ninja of coaching searches, not sure anyone does it better, welcome Baylor's vice president and director of athletics, Mack Rhoades. (Applause).

MACK RHOADES: Wow, what an unbelievable turnout. Thank you for coming out and celebrating on such a special, special day.

As we were thinking about the criteria for our next head coach, the attributes, I will readily admit that ninja wasn't on top of the list. But we'll take it. It's a bonus.

But, again, what a great day and a really special day to introduce our new head coach, Dave Aranda. There's a favorite quote of mine or one of my favorite quotes by Martin Luther King Jr., and I think it's appropriate for today. And it says, "If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."

And today, with Coach Aranda, we're not moving forward crawling, we're not moving forward walking, we're not moving forward running, but we're moving forward flying. (Applause).

As I thought about the significance of this day and what Martin Luther King Jr. stood for, I thought about certainly equality for all, but this idea of brotherhood. And the moment I thought about brotherhood, I thought about our football team, our young men sitting here to the left.

And I remember just walking in the locker room before every game and after every game and there was a great brotherhood. And that's why we won so many games. And there's not another group of young men that I would go to battle with than with our football team sitting right there.

(Applause).

You know, when you embark upon a search, right, it's a journey. And there's so many people that help you along the way and so many people that you rely on and you count on and ask questions and ask them to speak in to you. And I want to take a few moments just to thank all of those wonderful people that helped get us here today.

And certainly it starts with our leader, who has done such an unbelievable job leading this university, continuing to transform it, Dr. Livingstone. So thank you, Dr. Livingstone. (Applause).

Now I'm going to ask everyone to hold their applause until I'm finished thanking everyone else, but certainly our chair of the board of regents, Chair Clements, thank you for your unbelievable support and all of our board of regents, how they've supported our academic program long before I arrived and continue to do that and grateful to them.

The search committee, it really wasn't a committee, it was more like a club. It was a group of people that just had great respect for one another. And there was a friendship amongst all of us. So I'd like to thank that group.

Walter Abercrombie, the greatest compliment I can give Walter is that if I was the athletic director while he was a student-athlete, he would have been one of my all-time favorite student-athletes. Walter, you're about everything that's good and just appreciate you.

Marcus Sedberry, our senior associate AD for student athletic success, just appreciate your input and guidance and for always providing your opinion, even when I didn't want it. (Laughter). But appreciate it.

Mr. Paul Foster is a gentleman I first met in 2003 and just an unbelievable person. Just so much respect for him and just the way he values people. And he couldn't be with us here today but greatly appreciate him.

And the first row here, Regent Larry Heard, this is the second time that we've done this together. And we were joking a couple days ago that he's now qualified to be an athletic director. (Laughter) so just hold off a bit, all right? But just what great wisdom and just appreciate your friendship and everything that you did.

And then finally Jeramiah Dickey. Many of you know that Jeramiah and I have worked together since 2002, 2003, and what a great person. And I think he's the best number two in the entire country. I think he's the best football sport program administrator in the country. And just value him and his friendship and certainly appreciate him.

And then the boss of this club, really the true boss of the entire search, my wife, Amy Rhoades.

(Applause).

After the Sugar Bowl, Amy and I had this great idea of trying to spend five or six days quietly alone in the mountains and trying to reconnect, recoup from a great fall season. And so blessed with so many great coaches and student-athletes and certainly the football season, and I think that lasted 24 hours.

But like always, she rolled with it. And even provided her opinion at times on who she thought we should hire. So my daughters are here, Nicolette and Natalie and my son-in-law Andrew, just appreciate them.

Dione, thank you for letting six strangers hang out in your house for five hours. And Dione served us jambalaya and gumbo and King Cake and we knew we

had hired the right person.

And then finally my executive team for just keeping things moving forward.

To Coach Rhule and to his staff, I think like everybody in this room, we'll be forever grateful for what he did and the staff did in terms of their three years and moving the program forward.

Coach McGuire for serving as interim. That's a really tough spot to be in and he never wavered. And he did it with class and dignity.

And then, finally, again, I want to thank our student-athletes, our football student-athletes. As I was thinking about this, and maybe the greatest compliment that I can give them, we talk about impact on this world. And when I think about our student-athletes and our football team, when they walk into any establishment, that place becomes a more safer place. And I appreciate that. And I appreciate each and everyone of you, our young men. (Applause).

So, Coach Aranda's and my relationship began on Thursday January 9th at about 8:15 p.m. Mountain Standard Time. Coach was preparing to win a National Championship the following Monday versus Clemson.

I was trying to get back home to Waco, Amy and I were. And I was in a 4-foot by 4-foot office in the Sierra Blanca Regional Airport. And I recall that conversation, the first time that I had ever gotten on the phone with Coach.

And I just remember as that conversation continued that the momentum continued to build. And it continued to build as he was talking about his faith, and that his faith was at the core of the way he coached.

And it continued to build when I understood that this was a man that was truly a leader of young men and had done it and had believed in it and didn't just talk about it but lived that life. He was a man that was not only going to show our players in terms of playing the game, but he was going to make sure that they knew the game.

And I remember at some point in time during that conversation I started to think: This could be our next head coach; this could be our next head coach. And as we continued on the journey on the search and we started to think about what we really want in our next leader, we talked about the mission fit, absolutely -- Baylor's Christian values, something that we will never ever compromise.

And we thought about again the idea of pouring into

young men and challenging them to be the very best they can be, not just in football, but in everything in their life. This idea of everything counts, everything matters.

And then we thought about this idea of somebody that can help us and take us to that level to where we can win, win at the highest level and doing it the right way.

And as we continued to think every single time we were led back to Coach Dave Aranda. And in fact, everybody in the committee said there's just something special about Dave Aranda. And so as we continued, there's no doubt in my mind that God led us to Coach Dave Aranda.

You see, Coach is not just a great coach, he's not just a thoughtful, caring, wonderful person. He's not just a ninja, and he's not just a winner. Coach Aranda is a transformational leader of young men, and he is the right man to lead our program going into the future.

And so, please, all of you join me in welcoming Dione, Jordyn, Jaelyn and Ronin to the Baylor University family and please join me in welcoming our new head coach, Dave Aranda.

COACH ARANDA: Good morning. Thank you for being here this morning. I apologize for doing this on a holiday. We really wanted to have it when my family could be here. So blessed that I could be standing here as Baylor University head football coach and my family sitting down with me.

And I also wanted to do it today so we could get on the road and head out and recruit.

When this job became available, I thought about family right away. My oldest daughter, Jaelyn, I've seen her interact with her friends and I've seen her interact with us as a family, and she's got such a great heart. And I've always been impressed with her. And you're always worried about as a father with teenage girls, mean girls and that, and she's handled that with such grace. And my wife Dione has got such a hand in that.

Jaelyn had Baylor as a school to look at, as a school that was a favorite of hers, where she wanted to go to school. And I remember that was when I first started to look at Baylor. I know that I had been in this league before and we played Baylor. And I knew some of the coaches that have been through Baylor. I started to look at Baylor, and I could see the Christian mission. I could see small classes. Education was important. I could see great facilities, great community. People cared. People valued Baylor University and the sports programs.

I could see that they were winning at a big stage, at a high level and they were doing it the right way. You could see that starting with Jaelyn.

When we played, when we were prepping for our semifinal game, we had watched a lot of Baylor -- two games' worth versus Oklahoma. And I remember watching the TV copies. And in the TV copies I could see the togetherness of the team. I could see the toughness of the team. I could see in between the white lines, the energy and the focus and the effort.

But I could see on the sidelines, when we were up and when we were down, I could see the leadership. I could see guys bringing each other up. You saw love and you saw togetherness. You saw a team.

Anyways, when this job came open, I said this is in my heart, this is me. I feel like this is God talking to me. And when I had the opportunity to talk to Mack, I was so excited; it just felt right.

I'm happy to be in front of you guys this morning. I want to thank my family. I have a beautiful wife. We've been going since sophomore year of high school. So I was the linebacker and she was the cheerleader. Those that meet her, she's still 100 percent a cheerleader.

I would not be here, Dione, without you, and what you give to our family. Ultimate coach's wife, the effort and the energy you put into our family, babe, I love you. I'm so proud of my three kids. I think everyone that meets them, they come and they talk about how great hearts they have and how they're able to look them in the eye and talk to them.

My boy, Ronin, he's got complete sentences now, so it's all looking up. (Laughter).

Right when I was able to make contact with the search, I was able to communicate and start relationships with the people at Baylor. Very impressed with Mack Rhoades from the start. You could feel his vision. You could feel his energy. You could feel his passion. And I remember getting off the phone and talking to Dione afterwards and I go, "Babe, I really felt like there was a connection there. I feel like that's a fit." I remember thinking about Jaelyn and her and I's talk and it just got me really excited.

When I was able to meet the search team, we were able to talk quite a bit when they were eating all of our gumbo and stuff. (Laughter). Such great people. And it felt right. I could sense that their hearts were wide open. And I could feel that they wanted somebody that was like them.

When I've had the opportunity to meet with President

Livingstone, what strikes me is the warmth and the intelligence. Her family is outstanding. I was able to have lunch yesterday. And the thing I didn't know was the competitiveness. (Laughter).

It strikes you right away. You can sense that. It's right there. And at the most basic level I feel like this is home for us. The people that we meet when we walk through the hallway; the players, when I sit down and I meet with you guys one-on-one, I can sense your want of team, your want of unity.

I want to be a part of that. I'm excited to start recruiting. I'm excited to get our staff together. That's a process that we're just starting. I'm excited to be able to meet you all.

When Baylor comes to my mind, I think of Grant Teaff. I think of great coaches that have come before me. I had the opportunity to speak to Grant Teaff and, I told him a story of when I was a student assistant at the football coaches convention. And I would get up in the morning, I made sure I listened to his speech, and I remember I was in the hallway a day or two afterwards, and I was talking to a friend and Grant Teaff came walking by. And I stopped and got off to the side and go, geez, that's Grant Teaff.

So to be in this position, to be at the school that he was at, that he had success for and that he is a symbol of the values that are here, it's just so cool.

I had the opportunity to talk to Matt Rhule the other day. And Matt was someone I had told the search team that while I was at LSU, I wanted to come and visit Baylor, because I loved what they were doing on defense. And I loved -- I would find myself pulling up YouTube videos of Matt Rhule speaking, talking to the team, his motivational talks. I was just so impressed.

And here's a guy that's doing it the right way. Here's a guy that I would aspire to be. And so when I had the chance to talk to him, it was really fulfilling for me. And you could tell right away, such a great person. He has built such a great foundation here. I'm excited about taking the next step in that foundation and furthering the progress that he's made.

When we had our talks with the search committee, the number one question was, why Baylor? That was an easy answer for me. I have always wanted to be part of a program that was smart, tough and dependable. And my study of Baylor, that's everyone that's sitting and standing here.

And to be around people that believe in those same values, that are built in those values, you can go anywhere you want to go. With those intangibles, at the

most basic level you could see that Baylor shared the same values as myself.

To have the opportunity to coach with your Christian faith out front was a big pull. Unfortunately, most schools, that's not looked upon as something to be. At Baylor, I can coach being myself. And I can coach from the heart alongside kids who have their hearts wide open.

I'm excited about connecting with coaches throughout the state that believe in the things that I believe and building a family of coaches that can coach from the heart and coach the right way. I feel like as a player I've never met a player that would want to go out and make mistakes, that would want to go out and purposely not do the right thing. I think players want to do well and want to succeed.

And so I think when they know that you care about them and that you have their back and that you've done everything that you can to prepare them, when there is failure, you look at it as a learning opportunity and you know that God's got a great plan for you. And the next time will be better. That will be our values here.

Excited to be back in Texas. When Dione and I were in Texas a couple of years ago, we loved it. We loved the high schools, the education that's available. It's great to be able to make connection with a Texas High School Football Coaches Association, have such admiration and such respect for the coaching that goes on in this state and the teaching that goes on in this state.

To be able to set foot in Waco and grow roots and have our girls enjoy high school and have Ronin come up through the ranks is something that me and my family look forward to very much. I think if we can have half the success that Chip and JoAnna has had in Waco we'll be all right -- (laughter).

I wanted to close with some thank yous. When I think back to my journey coaching, I think of the players that I coached. I think of coaching in Division III, and I'm a sophomore in college and I'm holding a position meet in our English building. And I'm coaching a senior, a kid that's older than me, and I'm talking about block protection, footwork, stance and that. And he's listening to me. And he's all in. And he wants to get better.

And the relationship I have with that year's group, I still have today. I think of Texas Tech, being a grad assistant and being on defense and being responsible for the scout team offense and all of my relationships with kids that were walking on and just wanted to be coached and just wanted to have someone know their name and someone pay attention to them and someone ask them how they're doing, someone ask

them how did school go; when is your next test; is there anything I can do to help you.

Sonny Cumbie was our scout team quarterback. I've got a great friendship with Sonny today.

I think of the University of Hawaii when I was there and just the kids that we had from good parts of town, bad parts of town, kids from Hawaii, kids from all across the country coming together and being a team, having the opportunity to win the WAC championship.

Those relationships I still have. Those guys I still talk to. Corey Paredes, a linebacker for us, an all-WAC guy. And I remember Colin Kaepernick running around trying to score a touchdown. It was Nevada at Hawaii and Corey fended off two blocks, ran 20 yards got the ball out, fumble at the 1 and Hawaii wins the game. Corey and I still talk about that all the time.

I remember Devin White. Devin at LSU was a Butkus Award winner. Devin would be at the office on Sunday prior to me showing up. He wanted to watch film. He had already watched it. And he'd say, coach, what do you think here, why did you call this here, what could I do better there. And Devin wanted all the coaching and more. Fill me up. And I was inspired to give him everything I had.

I think of players first. This is a player's game. Players play this game. Players win games.

I want to thank my coaches, my head football coaches all throughout, especially Coach Orgeron. I've got such great love and respect for Coach O. When I called Coach O and told him I was taking the Baylor job, he was so happy for me. I told him that I had learned more from him than any other coach I had been around.

His story of hardships, learning from those hardships, applying lessons learned, having success and then sharing it with a group of men, there isn't a better story than that, and I'm so blessed to be a part of that. And I thank Coach O for that.

I'm thankful for my athletic directors that I've been associated with, whether it's Barry Alvarez or Joe Alleva or Scott Woodward. Their leadership skills and how they treated their teams is something I'm always going to remember.

All of these men have their traits and their values in part have made me what I am today. Guys, I'm so excited to be the head coach at Baylor. I'm excited to be working for you all. This is just the start. Sic-'em Bears.

(Applause).

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Have you had a chance to meet with the team yet; and if so, what's your message to them?

COACH ARANDA: I did. I think it was, when I was standing in front of them, you could tell how close of a team they were. You could see the togetherness and the cohesiveness that was evident in that game film or that TV copy film we were looking at. And so I told them that I wanted to earn their trust and I want to be a part of them.

Q. You talked about a little bit just your connections and your time spent in this state. How much does that help, not only in recruiting, but as you do try to assemble your staff?

COACH ARANDA: No, it does. I think right when I think of Texas, I think of the Texas High School Football Coaches Association. I think of the strength that lies in a high school student-athlete coming out of Texas and their development and their knowledge, the hard work that goes into going through four years of high school and graduating, winning championships.

And so I think that's a big piece. I think the knowledge I have of the coaches throughout the state is good. We're going to get it so it's great.

I've spoken at a bunch of clinics. I think I'm speaking at the Lone Star Clinic coming up. So our goal is to get around the state and talk to them about Baylor football.

Q. As a coordinator, what do you feel may be the biggest hurdle, biggest challenge of becoming a head coach? And also from that standpoint, do you still plan on calling the defensive signals?

COACH ARANDA: I think whenever you're making a move from, let's say, a position coach to a coordinator, our you're making a move from a coordinator to a head coach, you, in anticipation of that move, prepare and prepare and prepare.

And I think there's things that you do outside of being in the office and being amongst your team to prepare. You can go study with other people. You can read a book on it. You can call other people to get their input on it.

You can be alert in meetings, because one of the greatest educations you have is right in front of you. I think if you pay attention to the details of what happens in the day to day and think in bigger terms of where you're at, whether it's position coach to coordinator, or coordinator to head coach, I think those are things you can do to prepare.

And in saying that, I do believe that with all the preparation that can go into it, there's going to be something that will happen where you're not prepared and you haven't thought of.

And so I think when it gets to that point, you open up, communicate with the people around you and the people that you value and lean on them to come to a cohesive thought to get through it.

I've always been one where it's, what is, in this instance what is best for Baylor. And it wouldn't be what is my idea or what's his idea or what's your idea; what's the best. So I think in that context, I think the working relationship with Mack and our staff is vitally important.

Q. I've read a lot that you like to dictate on defense that you like to dictate to an offense. I'm curious, you've been around a lot of coaches, offensive coaches with all sorts of various styles. So what will your offense be like here at Baylor?

COACH ARANDA: I'd like for the offense to have the element of putting pressure on the defense at all times. So we can do that by formation. We can do that by personnel groups. We can do that by tempo. We want the defense to have to defend every blade of grass. We want to be on the attack.

And so I believe, with college football nowadays -- and this is going to be probably a defensive, this is a defensive guy talking -- but I think the rules in college football allow for advantages on offense, in terms of when the ball can be snapped, and you're going to the line of scrimmage with a play based upon the look you're playing and based upon the look you're changing it, the tempo piece, the ability to run with the quarterback and outnumber the defense. These are all things that we would like to maximize on.

The second thing would be that you would like your offense to feature your best players. And so to identify what our guys do best and then put our guys in the best position to succeed. And then off of those strong tendencies have curveballs and change-ups where it looks the same and plays out different. I think if you have those things and you're on your way.

Q. You've got a direct connection to three other Big 12 coaches at different stages, having been a roommate with Tom Herman, having worked for Les Miles. And I think you and Matt Wells were at Utah State at the same time. Talk about your relationship with them. And have you reached out to any of them and talked about where you're at and what you're doing? Second question I've got, you mentioned Coach O and the head coaches

you've been around, talk about what you've taken from those coaches.

COACH ARANDA: I remember Tom -- on my recruiting trip, I was telling this story of Tom was my host. And I remember just, like, in our conversation, I just never really had the chance to say too much. (Laughter).

Tom and I have got a great relationship. I really like Tom. And I want him to have success outside of when we him. (Laughter) (Applause).

Tom and I used to talk a lot, more on just the football part. He would always be my main go-to guy on what is up and coming with offenses, these are the latest trends, this is kind of where the game is going. I used to love those talks. He recently, we can't have those talks anymore, but -- (laughter) but I value Tom's friendship.

Matt, when we were together at Utah State, Matt and his family are just salt of the earth, great people. Our family had a real connection with Matt and his family. And I'm so happy for him. I think Matt and I have talked throughout just about things like culture, team chemistry, ways to run a program, ways to run a practice. I think Matt is a big thinker. And Matt's going to have success there at Tech. I'm proud of him.

And then Coach Miles, I love. I don't know if there's a coach out there that has a bigger heart than Les. And I'm very appreciative for Les for bringing my family and I to LSU. He took a chance on me and I'll always remember our talks.

During the season when times were tough and kind of the walls were kind of closing in, Les always had a bright, sunny personality about him. He never let the cold rain come in, so to speak. And I'm always grateful for him for that. Those were some tough times. I think it was with -- '16.

And then Coach O, Coach O was so wide open is what I appreciated about him. And I imagine you all hear, you all see it, too, and I appreciate that about him.

When we talk about all these coaches -- and I know for a time I would reflect just on how I'm built and go, you know, is a head coach something you want to do? And I would see these other coaches that are just -- they're built differently than I am.

And whether it's Mike Leach or Gary Andersen or Paul Chryst or Les Miles or Coach Orgeron, when you can be yourself and feel confident in who you are and love on your players and build connections, those connections will get through and be strong.

And so you saw that with Coach O and the way he

empowered our staff and empowered that community there in Baton Rouge. Some of those bus rides for that championship game were crazy. And I give Coach O a lot of the credit for that. It was all him.

Q. Did you take the job before you knew nine defensive starters were going? And the other thing, being a defensive coach in an offensive league, advantage or disadvantage for you?

COACH ARANDA: I knew of the defensive departures. I look at the student-athletes that have played and the playing time that they had last year, and the experience that is coming back I think it's something to build upon. I think there's good recruiting classes that are in the wings that are ready to make their mark. I think defense will be a strength this year.

And yes, the offense, I think some of that is changing, I feel. I think with some of the -- I think that's still true, and I believe that to be true, but I think there is in the advent of defenses here, whether it was Baylor, or I thought, in watching film from last year, I thought Kansas State did a lot of good things on defense, and I feel Iowa State has done good things on defense.

I think that defense in this league is making a comeback and I'd like to be at the forefront of that.

Q. Dave, the recruiting timeline with National Signing Day upon us, how quickly or how important is that with you establishing your staff?

COACH ARANDA: It is. I think along with that I think we want to be able to make sure on both ends of it that we get the right people. And so you'd like to have everybody in place and everybody committed in a certain time, but more important than that, I believe, is making sure that the right people are here, whether it's commitments to us or whether it's staff being in place.

And so I think the discussions that we've had on both sides of it, the staff coming together and the recruiting part have been very good. And I feel good about the pace of where it's going because we're going to identify and get the right people.

THE MODERATOR: Want to take a couple of minutes if there are questions again from the media for Mack Rhoades, Baylor Director of Athletics about the process or his lack of sleep or anything like that.

Q. (Off mic).

MACK RHOADES: You know, I think that was true. I think it became very evident when we first talked in terms of his passion and his love for Baylor. And I think it says something about a person in terms of their self-awareness when they know and they understand what a fit is for them.

And as we continued to talk, you know, I hope and I think we made sure that he continued to believe and think that Baylor was a great place for him and his family. And as we continue to get to know one another we certainly felt like he was a great fit for all the reasons we talked about.

The football stuff was a no-brainer. We knew that from the defensive side of the ball. But also I think great defensive minds understand what great offenses need to do to stretch them and to score and certainly felt really, really comfortable on that side of the ball as well.

Q. The last time you hired a coach you went outside the Power 5, got a successful head coach in Matt Rhule. Now, three years later, you've reached for a coordinator, a very highly successful program who probably was quite popular out there. Can you talk about what you've done maybe contractually to maybe keep these coaches here longer? (Laughter)?

MACK RHOADES: No. (Laughter).

I think a couple of things, right, the whole Group of Five, Power 5, we really try to block all of that out and just let's go get the very, very best person.

And Baylor's a great, great job. I think it's a top 10 job in the country. I think it's a top five job in the country. And it is because of these young men, it's because of the great coaches we have, the student-athletes, all of you. And so I would hope that the coaches that we attract here know that, understand that and want to be here for a long time.

And Coach Aranda and I didn't super secret handshake and say you have to be here a certain amount of years. But I know that he wants to be here. He wants to impact our people. And he wants to take our program to the next level. And so I feel really good that he'll be here for a while.

Q. It's been a long time since Baylor has hired a first-time head coach in football. What was it about Coach Aranda that sold you that this was the guy?

MACK RHOADES: Great question. I just felt like you just know as you go through an interview process, and I just thought that he's extremely prepared. This was the seventh, I think, football head coaching search that I've been through. And there was just a confidence about him.

And I also felt like and know that if he doesn't have the answer -- he's pretty smart -- he's going to figure it out.

And I've been doing this now for 20, 22, 23 years, and I

don't have all the answers. And I think the people that are great, the people that continue to grow and find different ways -- because we work and live in a business that's not stagnant -- it's those people that figure it out, it's those people that surround themselves with other great people.

And he just -- Coach gave me great confidence that he was ready and he could do all of those things and surround himself with great people.

If you know Coach Aranda, people, and you know this industry, you know this business, it's amazing how many people want to work for Coach Aranda. So I hope that answers your question.

Q. Along similar lines, you've hired multiple first-time head coaches. What are the qualities that are key in making that transition that maybe Dave has?

MACK RHOADES: I think their experiences, I think that's a big part of it. And who they've worked with and how they've learned. I think the ability to surround yourself with quality, quality people.

I think about when it's hard, when it's really, really difficult -- and we all know this is a really challenging job, a challenging position. We were so fortunate this year in terms of the injuries and all those things, but you can deal with that, and all of a sudden now you're not having the season that you expected.

And so who can navigate and have that perseverance, have that heart to take you through those challenges, I just again felt great about Coach Aranda and his ability to be able to meet those challenges and to do all of those things.

So those are some of the things that you look for, I think, in a first-time head coach.

Q. You talked about moving Baylor forward and compete for championships. How much of a feather in the cap is it that a week ago Coach Aranda climbed the mountain all the way?

MACK RHOADES: Yeah, that didn't hurt. It's hard to win. It's really, really hard to win. And it's even harder to win a National Championship. And to be able to hire somebody that knows that, that gets that, that understands that, the hard work, the really slim, slim margin between winning and losing, I think it's something that is incredible. It's incredible for our program. I think it's incredible for our young men.

And if we're going to do this, let's do this at the highest level. I really believe this. With Coach Aranda and our young men and the staff that he's going to assemble and Dr. Livingstone and all of you and Jeramiah and

our great, great staff, we're going to take a run at a National Championship. And nothing less is acceptable, and that's where we're headed.

Q. Can you take us through the coaching search process a little bit as far as how many candidates you interviewed, and with Coach Aranda, how many times did you talk to him before you knew it was time to move forward with the hiring? Was there something that he did or said that made you think at the very end this is the guy?

MACK RHOADES: Obviously I won't talk about any specific candidates, but it really started with a bunch of phone calls and time on the phone, an hour, hour and a half with a variety of candidates. Amy got to listen to a lot of those conversations.

But just trying to get a feel, trying to get a sense if that candidate truly had an appreciation for Baylor and what Baylor is and what it's about. This idea of chemistry -- did he connect, can you see yourself working with that individual, especially when times are tough?

Certainly the football acumen was part of it, but everybody we talked to I certainly felt really, really great.

And then from that process it was getting in front of a select few and really talking to them. And I don't know that any one of our interviews lasted less than about four hours.

So it was a little bit of perseverance, quite honestly, for the candidate. But had great conversations. Had a great, great pool of candidates. And we just kept coming back -- I just kept coming back to Coach Aranda. He was our first choice. He was the only person we offered the job to. And just know and feel great about the way he'll lead our program.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.