

Big Ten Football Media Days

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Washington Huskies

Coach Jedd Fisch

Press Conference



JEDD FISCH: Thank you. Good morning, good afternoon, I guess. It's great to be at my second Big Ten Media Day. Certainly feels a lot different than a year ago at this time. Certainly we don't need to wear name tags any longer, so that's a positive.

Representing University of Washington is a tremendous honor. This is a place with championship traditions, elite academics, and certainly one of the most passionate fan bases in all the country.

We spent a lot of time trying to build our culture over the past 16, 18 months, and I think we've gotten really close to getting the team that we're looking forward to compete with year in and year out for championships here in the Big Ten.

We talk a lot culturally about respect, accountability, integrity, selflessness, and enthusiasm. We believe that we're a very disciplined team. We believe in mental and physical toughness. Really what it all comes down to for us is that "be a pro" mentality. That "be a pro" philosophy is the foundation in everything we do, preparing, practicing, and competing in a way that we instill an NFL mentality in our program.

It's one of the things that we'll constantly address, constantly talk about with our players is how to act like a professional in everything you do, whether that's on or off the field, whether you become an NFL player or not.

We have a really good football team this year and really good coaching staff. I'm excited, first of all, to mention the new position coaches that we have, but also the coordinator, the coaches that have stayed with us for a long time. We have eight position coaches that have now been with me for four or five years, both at the last spot and here. We have a strength staff, a player development staff, a personnel staff, and a nutrition staff that have all traveled with us and have been with us now between four and five years.

We've also hired a new defensive coordinator this year in Ryan Walters. I think he's probably one of, if not the best

defensive coordinator in the country. I think to have him with us with his elite schematics, as well as his personality and his ability to connect with players is a huge win for the University of Washington. Coach Walters transformed Illinois' defense from No. 97 in the nation to No. 1 in his two years there and from No. 114 in total defense to No. 2 in his two years there.

We've also hired a new special teams coordinator in Chris Petrilli. Excited that Coach Petrilli is with us, and really for the first time in my career, other than in the NFL, to have two people designated strictly to coach special teams, in this conference I think is critical to the success of our program.

I was able to promote Jimmie Dougherty from quarterback coach and pass game coordinator to our offensive coordinator. Jimmie's been with me for seven years, one year at Michigan, one year at UCLA, three at Arizona, now two at Washington. This is his second stint at Washington. So it's great to have Jimmie with us working together with me and the rest of our offensive staff as we formulate our game plans.

We've also added Taylor Mays and Brian Odom, two coaches that everyone is very familiar with. Taylor Mays, obviously one of the greatest (audio interruption) that you will see.

College football continues to transition, and I will start with saying I appreciate my wife for all of her patience during these transitions. We are constantly in a change and figuring out how to handle so many different parts of the football world, recruiting world, NIL world, and the calendar is a moving target. Amber has been an unbelievable help and partner in the success of our program, as have my daughters.

I also want to thank Pat Chun and Erin O'Connell who made sure, while we were transitioning to the Big Ten and going into our second year, that we are competing at our highest level, whether that be through staff size, staff compensation, player retention, player development, player rosters, and player compensation.



We're investing in our players at the university through revenue share, through community NIL engagement, and it's a weekly topic that Erin and Pat hit with me and have been extremely supportive in our quest to be at the top of the Big Ten.

I also want to welcome a new president. President Jones is coming from University of Illinois, and we can't wait to have him as a part of our program as well.

I'm incredibly proud of the players who stepped up since we arrived here in January. In 2024 we entered the season with 21 new starters. This season we are entering with 11 returning starters. We've also entered the season a year ago with an offensive line that never played together, and yet we still produced a 1,000-yard rusher. We entered coming off of a National Championship run, and yet we're still able to find a way with one returning starters to make it back to a bowl.

As I look at the team that we have currently, I'm so proud of the guys that are here. We lost one starter in the transfer portal and replaced him with a starter from a team that I coached prior. The rest of our team either has moved on through graduation or are back, and that's a huge credit to the culture of our assistant coaches and our program.

I want to start and talk a little bit about the guys that we brought here today. Demond Williams, our quarterback, is an amazing young man. He's 19 years old, just turned 19 in March, and last year as a true freshman he completed 79 percent of his passes, eight touchdowns, one interception. Started our bowl game where he had four touchdown passes and a touchdown run. He's really just as special of a football player, he's an incredible individual, which I hope you guys will learn about later on.

Jonah Coleman, the running back that I brought today, has been with me for four years. He is a very special person in our lives, my wife and I, our girls consider him part of our family. He's had incredible success last year as a Big Ten runner, had over 1,000 yards, had ten touchdowns, and in our first year in the conference, earned All-Big Ten honors.

He's the first running back at the University of Washington since 1976 to rush for over 100 or more yards in his Husky debut. Jonah's going to be a fantastic pro. Also extremely proud of Jonah with a 3.91 cumulative GPA. He will be our nominee for the William Campbell Award, the academic Heisman.

Then the third guy that I brought, another player that's been with me for four years, part of our recruiting class of 2022 back in Tucson. Ephesians Prysock. He's started

every game for us since he was a true freshman. He along with Jonah was part of that class that produced NFL first rounders and second rounders, and the long, physical corner that Ephe is, I'm excited and proud to see what he'll do in the future.

Finally I just wanted to mention a couple players that I didn't bring that I'm really proud of. Denzel Boston in his first year starting for the University of Washington had nine touchdowns in the Big Ten. Tacario Davis, joining us after having an elite year in the Pac-12 and also in the Big 12. Excited to have Tacario with us.

We're going to need all that talent, and we're going to need all that staff leadership this season because we know we are playing in the best conference in the country with the toughest schedule in the country. We have an incredible home-field advantage. We are riding a 20-game winning streak, and we're excited for our home opener against Colorado State.

We head to Pullman week 4 to regain the Apple Cup, and then we come back and host Ohio State. For the second year in a row, we host a defending National Champion on our soil. We get to head to Michigan, head to Wisconsin, and really begin what is incredible Big Ten play where we play nine games in a row, and then we end with our fiercest rival in Oregon, where we know we have to play a lot better than we did a year ago.

Joining the Big Ten in 2024, the best conference in college football, we understand we have a weekly grind of games, not just the ones I mentioned. For the last two seasons, our conference showed its strength and dominance with back-to-back National Champions. Three of the last four teams that participated in National Championship games were from the Big Ten: The University of Washington, the University of Michigan, and Ohio State. The fourth team, Notre Dame, is also a school in the Midwest.

Two years ago the University of Washington competed in that game. Last year Ohio State competed against Notre Dame, and we are extremely proud of being able to compete for National Championships.

It's also the best conference academically. No conference compares to the research institutions that fills our 18-team conference. It's why I think it's so important that we let the school year be the school year and let the portal be the portal, after the school year is over.

On the football field, I don't think you prepare any better for the NFL than playing in our conference. Every week you have to travel, just like the NFL. It is not a regional league. It's a National League just like the National Football



Conference. I would tell you, as we go, that's why it's so imperative we need four automatic bids, a nine-game schedule in the Big Ten Conference. We can't leave it up to chance with a 5-11 combo.

The team of 2025 reflects the values at the University of Washington, but it also reflects the words of my former boss at New England, no days off. We are going to make sure that everything we do, we do it at the highest level, we do it every day, and we compete for championships and make University of Washington proud.

Q. You mentioned Ryan Walters, who over the last two years has been a head coach. How much added value is there when you get a coordinator that's been a head coach, results aside, just to understand what you're going through running a program?

JEDD FISCH: I went back and looked at the last couple years of teams that have won championships. I looked at last year's four playoff teams, and all four of those playoff teams had a head coach on the staff. You look at when Coach Franklin brought in Tom Allen, Coach Sarkisian having Kyle Flood, you look at Coach Day having Chip Kelly, Coach Freeman having Coach Golden, who I worked for at Miami, there's a great value there of having former head coaches. For me, it was one of the most critical things we could do.

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