

USF Athletics Press Conference w/Brent Blaylock - Aug. 18, 2026

FULL TRANSCRIPTION

PRESIDENT SALVADOR D. ACEVES:

All right, well, good morning and welcome to the Hilltop. My name is Salvador Aceves, and I have the privilege of serving as President of the University of San Francisco. Thank you for joining us today as we welcome our new Director of Athletics, Brent Blaylock, and look ahead to what promises to be an especially exciting year for the Dons. We are delighted to welcome Brent to USF. With more than 20 years of experience in collegiate athletics, he brings a strong record of collaborative leadership, a deep commitment to the student-athlete experience, and significant expertise in fundraising and donor engagement. These strengths will be especially important as we position USF Athletics for continued success in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Brent joins us at an exciting moment. Building on last year's momentum, our 14 men's and women's teams are preparing for another year of outstanding competition and, true to our Jesuit Catholic tradition, exceptional academic achievement. This past year, our student-athletes distinguished themselves both in the classroom and in competition. Together, they achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.57 across all sports and earned 50 West Coast Conference All-Academic Honors. On the field and on the court, they also earned 20 WCC All-Conference honors.

These accomplishments speak to what we value at USF, which is excellence in competition, certainly, but also excellence in the classroom, leadership in our community, and the formation of the whole person. Our student-athletes represent the very best of the Hilltop, so there is much to celebrate and even more to look forward to. Under Brent's leadership, the dedication of our coaches and athletic staff, the extraordinary commitment of our student athletes, and the support of the entire USF community, I am truly excited about the future of Dons Athletics. So, I hope that you will join us throughout the year, come to our games, support our student athletes, and be part of this very special chapter in USF Athletics.

So, please join me in one big go Dons in three. One, two, three. Go Dons! And now, it is truly my pleasure to introduce the chair of the University of San Francisco's Board of Trustees, Mr. Jack Boland. Jack?

JACK BOLAND, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Thank you, President Aceves, and welcome, everyone. Today is a very exciting day on the Hilltop as we celebrate milestones for USF Athletics. This is actually the 100th season of our USF men's basketball program. And our women's basketball program and our volleyball program for women is celebrating its 50th seasons. So very exciting milestones for our student-athletes

and our programs. USF Athletics carries a rich tradition of Jesuit Catholic excellence in achievement, sportsmanship, and student-athlete development. From the undefeated 1951 Dons football team, which we're all very familiar with, and their courage and their commitment to racial equality, through the Bill Russell days and the legacy of the 1955 and 1956 NCAA National Championships to today.

So, on behalf of our Board of Trustees, we are proud to steward that very important and treasured history under the leadership of our new athletic director, Brent Blaylock. Brent, welcome and go Dons!

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Good morning, thank you all for being here. It's an incredible privilege to serve as the director of athletics at the University of San Francisco and to be the steward of its incredible legacy. I want to thank President Aceves for the confidence he has placed in me, along with the support of Jack Boland and the Board of Trustees. Thank you to everyone across the university and community of San Francisco that has welcomed me and my family, not only to USF, but also to the city. I also want to thank those that planned the timing of today's event. Reason being, within the last week, we've not only announced a seven-figure gift, but thanks to our women's soccer team, I'm now undefeated as an AD.

It's safe to say my approval rating will never be higher. So, this is wonderful.

In all seriousness, I couldn't be more excited for the opportunities that are here at USF, and I want to share our guiding principles. We've come together as a staff in recent weeks to identify what we will prioritize, and I'm happy to share them with you today. First, the student-athlete experience will be at the center of all that we do. I would like to thank our SAC president, Daniel, and vice president, Lucy, who are here with us today. We appreciate your collaboration and leadership. Our responsibility is to provide student-athletes with a transformational experience that empowers them to reach their full potential, and that's academically, athletically, and personally.

That aligns directly with the Jesuit principle of *cura personalis*, caring for and developing the whole person. For us, that means developing leaders, pursuing championships, and building a unified environment where people feel connected to something bigger than themselves. Those priorities are not separate from one another. In fact, I think that they strengthen one another. We can expect excellence as we build a place where our student-athletes and staff are supported and challenged to be at their best. We can be ambitious competitively while remaining committed to who we are as an institution. And we can pursue championships while developing great students and great people. Ultimately, our goal is simple. We want to become the very best version of USF athletics that we can be.

We're not trying to become somebody else. There's tremendous history here, a special identity, and an enormous opportunity ahead for us. But becoming our best will require a competitive spirit in everything that we do. Certainly, that means competing for championships. But competitiveness is bigger than what happens during the games. We need to compete academically. We need to compete in recruiting talented prospects and retaining talented coaches and staff members.

We need to actively seek new and creative ways to generate revenue. We need to compete for the attention and engagement of this great community. And we need to constantly ask ourselves, how can we get better? My expectation is that we are going to elevate the standard of competitiveness throughout this department, and we're not going to shy away from that. College athletics is experiencing extraordinary change right now. The world around us is evolving rapidly, and no one has the luxury of standing still. With this disruption, however, comes opportunity. Our responsibility is to be ready to meet the moment. I'm guided by a quote from General Eric Shinseki.

It says, "If you do not like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less." That mindset matters because organizations that succeed in this next era of college athletics will be the ones willing to adapt, make difficult decisions, find creative solutions, and move forward with confidence. Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to work with and learn from some exceptional coaches and leaders. Championship coaches such as Nick Saban, Kyle Shanahan, Bill Self, Tommy Lloyd, Sean Miller, Jay Johnson, Laura Ianello, Mike Candrea, Pat Casey, Mitch Canham, and many others have influenced how I think about leadership and high performance.

They all have different personalities and different approaches, but there are common themes - vision, determination, alignment, discipline, planning. The best organizations are incredibly intentional about what they want to become, how they want to align their people, and their daily actions around getting there. That is the kind of environment we intend to build. And I can't think of a better city in which to do it. There is something about San Francisco that resonates with me. For generations, people have come to this area believing they could create something extraordinary. For those that came west during the Gold Rush, to the great businesses and institutions built here, to generations of entrepreneurs and innovators, even Golden Gate Park, right?

This region has attracted people who challenged what others thought was possible, worked relentlessly towards it, and created their success. There is ambition here, there is creativity here, and there is resilience here. That mentality fits the energy of what we will have. The time is now to fully embrace our identity, not simply as a university in San Francisco, but the University of San Francisco. Athletics can play an important role in strengthening that connection with our community. We want people throughout the city to know the Dons, follow the Dons, support the Dons, and take pride in what our student-athletes and teams represent. That means building

meaningful relationships with our alumni, our supporters, connecting with our neighbors, the business community, and people throughout San Francisco.

For those who already support the Dons, thank you. I appreciate you; we value you, and we are very appreciative of your unwavering support. We will build a program that makes you proud. For those that are not yet on the bandwagon, we ask that you come check us out. Let us show you what we represent. Give us a chance to earn your support. And seats are going to fill up fast. Although we're still early in the process, I'm excited by the progress and the steps that we have already taken. We've invested in our people and our culture. A few weeks ago, our staff came together for a culture workshop, and we had a candid conversation about where we are today, where we want to be, and how we are going to get there, and what it will take collectively.

We've created a new initiative that pairs each of our teams with one another to encourage cohesion and connection among our coaches and student-athletes. We recently received a historic \$1.25 million gift that will support our men's basketball program and launched the Director of Athletics Leadership Fund, providing important resources to invest in the future of this department. A gift of that magnitude shows what is possible and necessary for us to compete at the highest level. This generous donor wanted to motivate others to contribute however they can and at all levels of giving. It is this level of belief that is needed from our supporters.

We all need to do more than ever before to realize the true potential for USF athletics. We're also launching Bridge Builders, a new approach that provides our Bridge to Excellence supporters with enhanced benefits and inclusion opportunities associated with their giving. There will be more details on that to come in the next month or so. We've extended the contracts of Chris Gerlufsen, Rob DiToma, and Gina Kehr - coaches whose programs represent USF extremely well, and I'm proud to have them on my staff. We've added a team of mental performance professionals to support our student-athletes and help them perform at their best. We're actively interviewing two leadership-level positions, the first of which is the Chief Revenue Officer for Athletics, the second being an Associate AD for Communications. They will strengthen how we activate and engage with external opportunities, which is very important for us as we continue to grow.

When it comes to the proud Dons, we have an exciting fall in front of us, as the President mentioned. Women's soccer, led by interim head coach Alexis Mata. They are returning multiple All-WCC freshman team selections. They are off to a 1-0 start. We'll see everybody Thursday, 6:00 p.m. against Sacramento State. Yes, very good. Men's soccer, primed for a big season, returning four All-WCC first-team selections, including first-teamers Brayden Beason and David Raphael.

I'm excited to see how Coach Chris Brown continues to elevate this program in his sixth year of leadership. They're off on a road trip right now against some tough competition. I look forward to seeing how the team does. Coach Diogo Silva is working hard with our women's volleyball student-athletes to get them ready for the first competition later this month. They just returned

from a culture leadership retreat with Mary Hile, and we have to ask, if you're going to go on a culture leadership retreat, is there a better person on this earth to have with you than the great Mary Hile?

So, thank you for that. Yeah.

As I mentioned, we're very excited to have extended Gina on leading our triathlon program. They returned eight student-athletes, a couple top ten finishers, and they'll get started a few weeks from now in South Dakota. South Dakota, yes. And then lastly, our men's and women's cross-country teams are in full swing under Coach Jordan Carpenter's leadership. And I have to say, they provided me with one of the more fun and tiring experiences I've had as the director of athletics. They included me on a run.

During that time, I got to connect with student-athletes from the West Coast to Nebraska to Norway. And it reminded me of why we do what we do, right? It is to help them. It is to give them an environment to thrive. And also, for us, it's to be able to steal a little bit of that energy and exuberance that we have with these young, talented student-athletes. So, thank you, coach, for that opportunity there. Their first meet, USF Invitational, here September 4th in Golden Gate Park, another opportunity for us to come out and see Don supporting Don. So as Jack mentioned, we're looking forward to a couple of historic moments this year. 50th year celebrations for our women's sports, highlighted by women's volleyball, women's basketball, big events that we will have. We'll also be inclusive of all the other sports as well with events throughout the year.

And the 100th season of our storied men's basketball program. So, we ask all of you to be on the lookout for information about those events and celebrations. But these are all individual steps. Collectively, they represent something larger, however. We are building. We are investing in people. We are defining expectations, and we are strengthening resources. We're beginning to create the foundation of where USF athletics can go. I know there's a lot of work ahead of us. I also know that meaningful progress does not happen overnight.

But I believe deeply in what is possible here. We have an extraordinary university. We have talented student-athletes and coaches. We have passionate alumni and supporters. And we live in one of the greatest cities in the world. We have the opportunity to build something that represents all of those things at the highest level. And finally, I want to thank my family. Leadership opportunities like this are never individual accomplishments. They require sacrifice, support, patience, and a belief in the people closest to you. I would not be standing here without them, and I'm incredibly grateful that we get to begin this chapter together.

I know how to provide a nurturing environment to others, because that is what my parents provided to me. I know what it feels like to have unconditional support, someone believing in you without limitation, and being pushed to be the best version of yourself, because I'm fortunate to have that every day with my wife, Kate.

And I know the daily quest that it takes to make someone proud of you, because I love that every day for my son, Jeff. I'm honored to be a Don. I'm grateful for the opportunity to lead this department, and I'm ready to get to work. Thank you. Go Dons!

CHRIS FORTNEY, ASSISTANT ATHLETICS DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNICATIONS:

We will now open up for questions. If you can just raise your hand and state your name, and we'll pass you the mic.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Hi.

WES CABLE (SF FOGHORN):

Hi. Wes Cable, Sports Editor for the Foghorn. Given your Division I experience, what is something that this new Division I area you can kind of like - what's something new that you can really show to this new position in school?

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Yeah, I think, you know, you have the benefit of being in different places all throughout the country, of which I've been on all coasts, in the middle, everything, wherever it may be. You get to pick up things on how people do things that you really admire. You maybe also get to see some things where you're like, eh, I'd probably do that a little bit differently myself. So, I think the benefit of that and being at all different levels of resources and those things, you just get to pick up different perspectives and to know, hey, if we face this situation, this is how I've seen it be done before, either well or not so great. And this is what I learned from that to be able to do it on my own. I think the other thing about that is you then have a network, right? And as I like to say, it's not what I know, but it's all the people that I know; it's what they know. So then to be able to rely on a great network, to be able to just say, hey, have you experienced something like this? Can you help walk me through it? So, I think the benefit to coming to USF is to bring just a vast level of exposure, knowledge, and experience and say, hey, I've kind of seen things in other places. I know we can do this or this can be the best version of USF. Take on whatever that is and then be able to go execute it.

WES CABLE (SF FOGHORN):

Great. Thank you.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Thank you.

MARTY BECKER (SEASON TICKET HOLDER):

Hi, I'm Marty Becker, supporter of all of the athletic teams. And we're really excited to see you out in the city, see you out and about, social media; we see you everywhere, right? And I think the point is that all of us collectively that are here, that are very much invested in the athletic department, are so excited to see where you're going. You're trying to kind of draw people into the university and to get, if we all want, more people coming to all of our various athletic events. And I think we really will see it with this kind of outreach. And we're really excited about it. We're hoping everyone in this room and other people that, you know, people in schools, grammar schools, you know, we want people to start coming to all of our events from golf to, you know, baseball, basketball, women's basketball.

We fill the gym for men's basketball. We want to do it for a lot of other sports. So, we're really excited about what you're doing and where you're going with that. Thank you.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Thank you for that. You know, and to me, it's a big point of emphasis as we get started here. As I mentioned, we're the University of San Francisco, and we really need to embrace that. And we need the city to understand that we've got room for everybody. And we want people to support the Dons in the same way they do all the other teams that are here in San Francisco. And there's room for that.

You know, and we have a place for everybody to feel like they belong and can have a good time. We've got phenomenal student-athletes and coaches. And I think all it takes is people getting out in the community to show them that for them to be able to come in. And as I said, give us a chance. I don't think anyone's going to be disappointed in those things. And you mentioned filling for men's basketball, but wanting to spread that around. And I couldn't agree more. To me, our goal should be to create a basketball ecosystem where it is all things basketball, men's and women's together. And when I say basketball, it's not just referring to one. It is referring to both.

And I have been fortunate to be at several schools that do a really good job of having the two programs uplift each other. And I believe that we can accomplish that here. I want people to know that during the fall, during the winter, all those other times, that they can just show up to War Memorial Gym to come watch good basketball. And it's not just on the men's side or the women's side. They know when they get on that court that great basketball is going to be played.

PATRICK MCNICHOLAS (LONGTIME DONOR & SUPPORTER):

Yeah. First of all, congratulations.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Thank you.

PATRICK MCNICHOLAS (LONGTIME DONOR & SUPPORTER):

What would you say are your top three priorities for the 26-27 season? You don't have to limit it to three, but prioritizing those priorities.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

I will limit it to three. So, I would say that the first thing is to get a unified team and having us all agree on where we are going with that. And that's not to say that the team was not unified before. But what we need to know is that we're all in this together, that we're working for something bigger than ourselves, and that we're all aligned in that way. Because if you have some scatter or some difference in there, then it doesn't matter what the other priorities are. It's going to be hard to get them. So, one, let's all get in the boat together and then start rowing together in whichever direction that we so choose to do so. I think the next part is going through and working with either our coaches, our student-athletes, or our staff departments, and really finding out what do you need to be successful.

And that can take on different forms for different people. For some, that's a facility. For some, that's some type of investment in their program. For others, it's just, hey, we need more promotion of what's going on. Really understanding what they need to help them go to whatever their perceived next level is. I can't decide that for them. And then the third part is just a larger assessment of where we are. It's hard for me, being two months and change into this, to know this is exactly all the things that we need because I'm still learning. So, I don't like to fully say, hey, it's just going to be a year-round listening tour.

I think there's maybe some passivity to that. We have to be more aggressive than that. But it is going to be a lot of absorbing and a lot of paying attention to then know, okay, this is where I think we can really fit in and get better in that. But altogether, alignment, growth-minded orientation of all the things that we do, those will be the two driving priorities for us as we get started here. Thank you. Thanks.

TOM HOSHIYAMA (LONGTIME DONOR AND SUPPORTER):

Tom Hoshiyama. By the way, you look good in a tie.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Always second to you, Tom. No one better dressed in the room.

TOM HOSHIYAMA (LONGTIME DONOR AND SUPPORTER):

My question is, will you have any kind of committee to oversee unrestricted funds? Will I have a what? Will you have a committee to oversee the unrestricted funds that we're getting?

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

That is something that we've discussed, putting together, yes. The idea with these unrestricted funds is to be able to allow us to adapt and evolve quickly to areas that we think need investment. That's over a variety of things where that's investing in a student-athlete need, in a retention need, a facility need, some of those things to know that, hey, let's have the responsiveness to be able to say, all right, we don't have time to do a full-on campaign for this, although Brandon and his team do an excellent job for us on those things. But sometimes we just need to have current use dollars that we're able to deploy however needed. Now, with that, that is not a singular decision of one. So, we will talk about how we want to have a group to look at those things. I think sometimes committee work can slow things down, and the idea of that fund is to be able to be responsive on those things. But I'm also a big believer that the more perspectives at the table, the more informed you are in your decision-making. So, we will certainly look to that.

TOM HOSHIYAMA (LONGTIME DONOR AND SUPPORTER):

Thank you. I just want everybody to know that I had the opportunity to have lunch with Brent, and I think he's going to be able to do it with our support in gaining our 100 percent behind you.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Thank you very much, Tom. It means a lot.

GEORGE DEVINE (USF WOMEN'S BASKETBALL BROADCASTER):

Brent, welcome to the Hilltop. George Devine, broadcaster for women's basketball. You talked about the importance of having somebody leading the revenue operations here and bringing in more opportunities for promotion. Where do you see the advertising, promotion, and touching the greater San Francisco community coming in? What's your plan for that in year one?

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Yeah, I think a lot of that is going out into the business community and figuring out what problems we can solve for them. I think when you come to some of our competitions, we're able to provide exposure in areas you may not be able to get it, from a general admission ticket and the people who may be buying those all the way up to some of San Francisco's finest that are in this room and others in court and size like that during the game.

So, the amount of reach that we can provide there, I think, is novel and unique for us. But as you know with these businesses, you have to go in, and you have to help them with something. So, it's: do you want the exposure we're providing on TV? Do you want access to student-athletes, maybe a younger group, or to our alumni group, whatever it may be, to do that? The goal is that we're providing something that's going to attract eyeballs and a lot of attention so that there's value provided back to them. And we have such extraordinary businesses and business people that are going to be able to help us through that as well. The Chief Revenue Officer for Athletics, their whole goal is to really wake up every morning, go tonight, every day, deciding how they

can generate more resources for our department. So, I'm not a firm believer that money provides happiness in your personal life altogether, but I am when it comes to the business world. So, the more resources we have, the more friction points and stressors we can start eliminating. Now that does not mean that our facilities, our jerseys, and all those other things are going to start looking like NASCAR fire suits, right? But if you are interested in a jersey patch, please come see me afterwards. But what I will say is that there's a tasteful way to do all of that that provides more resources to the department and also provides value back to this incredible business community

MARY HILE (USF HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 1986):

Hi Brent.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Hi.

MARY HILE-NEPFEL (USF HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 1986):

So, Mary Hile-Nepfel, is there anything that has surprised you since coming to USF in June? Any surprises either with the athletes, or your staff, or the city?

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

So, I'll take a tweak on that. Not full on surprised because I didn't exactly know what direction I would go, but I'll say what has impressed me. And that is every single person I talk to that's affiliated with the Dons that are seemingly coming out of the woodwork as I'm either here around campus or the neighborhood or out throughout the city or social media or wherever. There is such a passion here for success and such a desire to be successful. And that has been incredibly impressive. There's no one that I've talked to that's kind of taken a ho-hum approach to this whole thing. They're all, hey, we're excited. We want to win. We want to do this. We want to do that. So, I've taken the time to explain to them what some of that means. And then in some of those things and the commitment that that takes, you can't just wake up and say, we're going to win.

You know, like there's a whole process to that. But to me, that's been very impressive. It's just how everybody seemingly that's associated with USF said, okay, like, sleeping giant's been used, that term, and some of those others. And who knows all of that? But what I do know is there is a passionate base here that we are going to awaken and bring alive and get a reason to get aligned with us.

MARY HILE (USF HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 1986):

Thank you.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Yeah.

PAT OLSON (USF MEN'S BASKETBALL BROADCASTER):

Hi Brent, Pat Olson, long-time radio voice here at the university. I want to kind of expand, if you could, on the comment that came from the back about your social media presence.

It's well-liked, obviously, it's been noticed by our season ticket holders. Something you want to expand on: you mentioned running with the team. When we met, I think it's no secret that you'd like to do more one-on-one type interviews. Can you expand on that philosophy of kind of being out there and being seen in this wonderful city of ours?

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Yeah, well, I will tell you it's a new thing. In fact, check me if I'm wrong, I think my personal Instagram may have 17 followers and maybe one post every three years. So, it's a new world for me. A lot of that came from just the things that I was hearing and picking up during the interview process and the onboarding process of, hey, there's a real opportunity here that if you choose to connect with the city and with the fan base and all those other things, that'll be very well received.

And there's a hunger for that. And so, I took it upon myself, and I said, hey, we will build all these bridges. We will make everyone know that we're going to be part of the fabric of the city. So, you know, there's not a lot of sacrifice on my end going around and seeing all the great sites and eating the great food and doing all those things. I'm happy to be able to call that work to be able to do. But I want people to know that I care, that we are part of this thing, and that we are here to intertwine USF as much as possible into the city of San Francisco. And that starts with me and my leadership. And my goal is that as I go and do these things throughout the city, that I start seeing more logos and more green and gold and all those things around the city.

And that people now feel like they can be more invited and more welcome to come to our events or do all those other things or welcome our student-athletes to come do an NIL event down at their storefront or whatever it may be. I want people; it kind of goes back to the whole thing. I'm going to keep saying it. We are the University of San Francisco. And the only way that we can show it is to be out and about in San Francisco and letting them know that those connections mean a lot to us.

TOM MALLOY (LONGTIME DONOR AND SUPPORTER):

Tom Malloy, welcome.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Thank you.

TOM MALLOY (LONGTIME DONOR AND SUPPORTER):

I was a freshman in 1957, two years after two national championships. And as opposed to traveling around with your parents to find the school you wanted to go to, I've never seen the University of San Francisco. Got an airplane, flew up here, got in the cab at SFO, and I said to the cab driver - I take it back. I took a Barrett cab, Barrett was the name of the bus company, to a transportation center down in the city, went over and got a cab. And I said to the cab driver, he says, where do you want to go? I said, University of San Francisco.

And without saying another word, he drove me right to the front door where we're on Fulton Street. That's how well known we were. I just want to bring this up to you.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Yeah!

TOM MALLOY (LONGTIME DONOR AND SUPPORTER):

Never said another word to him about that. And he drove me right to that gate over there where the law school is now and by St. Ignatius. But the whole thing is you've got to win. Two years in a row, the University of San Francisco was in the national news and the green sheet, which is the sports page here in the city; I think it is, I don't know if it's still green.

But you got to win the right way. You know, and I mean, he drove me right to that front door without saying another word. They knew where the University of San Francisco was. And that's all I want to get across. Everybody involved in the athletic department, we have to win and win the right way. I'm really excited about your background.

To talk to you now. It's all the right buttons, and we have to remember that. And I'm really excited again. Like I say, congratulations. I'm glad you're here.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Yeah, thank you, Tom. And you hit on a great point: the pathway to success, you can't cut corners. You can't take the easy way out. Sometimes you just have to put your head down, and the only way is through, right?

And we will do it the right way. We will do it in a way that makes everyone proud, but you have to put in the work to be able to get there. So, it would also help, Chris, if you could find another Bill Russell for us, just locally here, to be able to get some of those championships. But I appreciate you saying that, and that is how we will approach it. We will do things, as I told the staff when we met, really guiding principles are do things the right way and treat people the right way. And I feel like if you can check both those boxes and whatever you do, you're going to end up all right.

LARRY (LONGTIME DONOR AND SUPPORTER):

I'm just an old Don. My name is Larry. I guess I've gone through about 10 athletic directors. And I don't have a question. I just have a comment. And I don't need a response. Some athletic directors were successful. And some were not. The only thing you have to remember. This is all good. And welcome to sunny San Francisco. Especially today.

Beat Santa Clara.

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

There we go. Hey, what did we talk about yesterday? Huh? Yeah.

SARA DOELL (USF HEAD WOMEN'S GOLF COACH):

He literally told us yesterday that that's our goal. Sara Doell, head women's golf coach here. I just want to speak on behalf of some of the coaches. Thank you for the way you've started so far, really talked a lot about connection. He's asking our opinions. He's laying the groundwork for some really strong culture here, and I've talked to a lot of the other coaches, and we're all really appreciative of the way you started. The question I have is what are you most looking forward to this year?

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

Most looking forward to this year? That's a good question.

I'd say it's a handful of things. I would like to say by the end of this year that we've gone through. So, we spent, what, two, three hours last Friday working on a culture workshop and doing all those things. We just released a new culture statement. I think as we get through a year from now that we can look back at that statement and we don't have to read it anymore because we're just living it every single day. And I think that's the biggest thing.

I think you have to be process-oriented. The easy answer is to say, I'm standing next to all of you, and we're holding up a trophy, and we're doing this and that. But you can't judge yourself on just that. Doesn't mean we don't want those; we do. But we have to have the right process, and we have to have the right environment in that. So, the thing I am most looking forward to is that all those things that we talked about, they weren't just words on a page.

It's actually something that this department is living and breathing every single day. Because if we get that right, all the other stuff is just going to come naturally with that. So that's what I'm most looking forward to.

CHRIS FORTNEY, ASSISTANT ATHLETICS DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNICATIONS:

Any final questions? Any final remarks?

BRENT BLAYLOCK (USF DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS):

No, just thank you all for being here. I know some of you traveled pretty far to get here. It really means a lot for you to take the time. Just know we're committed. We're going to do the work. And also, I am always available. So, email, cell phone, whatever it may be, I want to hear from you, good or bad. Because if I'm not hearing from you at all, that's when we start getting concerned, right? So just let me know any way that I can help you, your perspective, the historical knowledge.

We have all those things. As I said, I'm the steward of this great place, and I can only do it if I know all the things that you all know to help us get to where we want to be, okay? So, thank you all.