



## Baseball National Champions, Back-to-Back, July 11, 2016

### Title

“The View from the Dugout”

### Date

July 11, 2016

### Location

Gill Coliseum, Oregon State University.

### Summary

At the outset, Casey's interview focuses on his earliest interests in baseball, his memories of Coach Jack Riley, the details of his first season in charge of the Oregon State baseball program, and the evolution of his coaching philosophy. He then comments on the construction of Goss Stadium, the involvement in the program of Norb and Ann Wellman, and the progress that the program made following conference unification in the early 2000s.

From there, Casey shares his insight into the 2005, 2006, and 2007 College World Series seasons, commenting on team chemistry and excitement within the fan base during all three years. Casey shares specific recollections of the 2005 super-regional match-up with USC, as well as the team's 4-3 loss to Baylor that eliminated Oregon State from the 2005 tournament. He likewise recalls the club's 2006 championship series versus North Carolina, as well as OSU's dominating run through the 2007 tournament.

Casey then responds to questions concerning the push that led to conference unification within what was then the Pac-10; the performance of pitcher Jonah Nickerson in the 2006 College World Series; personal memories of Chris Kunda and Darwin Barney; the challenges posed by recruiting high profile athletes; and his approach to counseling players who are considering leaving school early. He likewise shares his thoughts on preparing for conference opponents week in and week out, including scouting; the amount of time that he devotes to fundraising; and, as a concluding topic, his sense of the OSU Athletic Department at this point in time.

### Interviewee

Pat Casey

### Interviewers

Greg Garcia, Chris Petersen

### Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/baseball/>

## Transcript

**Chris Petersen:** OK, today is July 11th, 2016 and we are very pleased to be sitting with Pat Casey, head baseball coach at OSU. We are in Gill Coliseum for this interview, and conducting the interview today will be Greg Garcia. So I'll turn it over to Greg right now.

**Greg Garcia:** Excellent. Good morning, Mr. Casey.

**Pat Casey:** Good morning.

**GG:** My first question for you is, what drew you to baseball?

**PC:** Wow, what drew me to baseball? I don't know, my dad threw me one and I caught it, I guess. I think that when I was young, there was everything about every major sport – football, basketball, baseball for me – that was attractive. And I really enjoyed that and loved playing. I could tell you who my Little League coach was, who my high school coach was, who my junior high coach was. And so baseball, I think, is one of those games that was difficult in the Pacific Northwest at the time. We didn't have artificial fields, didn't have all this Diamond Dry stuff. So you missed a lot of games but, boy, when you got to play you sure loved it. And it was a game that you could go down and play in the park with all the kids in the neighborhood. I enjoyed it from the very first time I, like I said, I saw a ball coming at me.

**GG:** How did you get involved with OSU baseball?

**PC:** How did I get involved with OSU baseball? I got hired in August 1994 to be the head coach here. And obviously I had played against them when I was coaching at George Fox College and so I had played against Oregon State and just had thought it was pretty neat to come down here. And at the time I started coaching at George Fox, I couldn't have even imagined that I'd have the opportunity to coach at Oregon State.

**GG:** Did you have any interaction with your predecessor, Jack Riley?

**PC:** I did. Jack's a good man. He actually was in the interview process, so when I went through the interview, it was a full day and there was eight different stations, and one of them was to meet with him, visit with him. And like I said, I played against Oregon State and so I knew Jack prior to that. He recruited both of my brothers to play baseball down here. A kid that I knew really well, Cabe Dolan [?], played for him. And so I had known who Jack was and when I got an opportunity to coach at George Fox and coach against Jack, I learned the other side of Jack too; competing against him as a coach as opposed to, as a player, playing against his teams. I can tell you that every time I had the opportunity, I was impressed with what kind of teams he was producing.

**GG:** How would you describe him as a coach?

**PC:** Aggressive. Competitive. Fiery. Disciplined. Little things mattered. He was a fighter. I have deep respect for him and the accomplishments that he had here at Oregon State.

**GG:** Do you have a particular memory of Jack?

**PC:** Yeah, I've got a few of them of Jack. One is on the field and one is off the field. The one on the field is, we were playing them here one day and I was the coach at George Fox, and he brought a freshman in named Derryberry. And they were ahead of us like six or seven to one, and he runs him out there for the eighth or the ninth inning to get to the end of the game. And the kid had a little trouble and I could hear Jack – I was coaching third base – Jack came out of the dugout and by the time he crossed the white line, he said, "that's not really what I had in mind." And I think he was taking the ball from the guy before he even got to the mound. So that part was, I thought that was quite funny.

And then in our interview, he was taking me around showing me. Well, we went over to McAlexander where they had indoor cages. And they used to have track here, so they had an old pole vault pit and then the pole vault pit, inside, was all filled with those old padded yellow foam things that when you go up over the thing and you land on it, they were all covered with blue vinyl and then you would land on them and it's soft. Well, they were all in there and all dusty, probably had been there for years. And so somebody had put a bunch of props for a play in there, so when we got in there, Jack was

grunting about, "yeah, these people put all this stuff in here and I can't get to my batting cages. And gosh darn these guys, I just get so upset with them." So he tried to move one of these props so we could walk through, and it had wheels and it moved faster and it flipped him into the pole vault pit. And he landed in all this foam, and all this dust came up, and he came out of there and dust got all over his hair. And he was [makes angry noise], and I'm sitting there thinking, "oh my gosh, Jack Riley just fell in the pit." I reminded him of that not long ago too. It was funny.

**GG:** The Beavers ended the 1995 season with a record of twenty-four wins, twenty-four losses, and one tie. Do you have any particular memories of that season, your first season?

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**PC:** Lots of them. One is replacing a guy like Jack, who had an extreme amount of success, especially the year before. That transition into becoming a Division I coach and taking over another guy's team who had a very successful year before. They lost a lot of guys to the draft, they lost a lot of seniors, they lost a lot of people. We didn't have a lot of those guys back. But that was a very difficult thing for me to do, because those guys that were on his team that did come back, the season before, had a very successful season. And here we are struggling. And we've got new guys trying to mesh with the older guys. I'll tell you what, the one thing I give them all credit for is how well they handled it and how well they got through. Because I was a young coach and your pride gets in the way and your fear gets in the way of, "man, I'm at Oregon State taking over for Jack Riley and I don't want to screw this up." And so, there were some really neat guys on that club that I still stay in touch with today.

**GG:** How would you describe your coaching philosophy?

**PC:** I think it's unique in the fact that I never was a coach for anybody else. I was a player in professional baseball and I got released on June 22nd, 1987, and probably ten days later I was the head baseball coach at George Fox. So I had to create my own system. I had to create my own identity. And so I think it's unique in the fact that I feel like you have to be diverse enough to adapt to the personnel you have. You can't have your head in the sand if you don't have any power and try to play long ball. And you certainly can't try to run if you don't have any speed. So I think that our philosophy is you win games with pitching and defense, and the offense decides by how much. I do think we like to start runners, I think we like to defend – I think we've been a really solid defensive club throughout my tenure here – I think our pitching has continued to just get better and better, and a number of those years were real good offensively as well. Cole Gillespie was the offensive player of the year in the conference, Jacoby Ellsbury was the player of the year in the conference. Michael Conforto a couple times. So we've put out some real good offensive players. But I believe that you win with pitching and defense.

**GG:** Early in your career as head coach – having inherited the baseball program, as you pointed out – what were some of your goals for your teams and the baseball program as a whole at OSU?

**PC:** Well certainly you have to have goals off the field. What's our graduation rate going to be? What are these young men going to be when they leave the baseball program? How are they going to act socially? What kind of men are they going to become? What's their character going to be? Those things are important.

On the field? Win championships. I think that it gets very simple when you just flat state, "win championships." I don't think there's any way that I was looking to tell guys that, "well, we want to slow down and take this one step at a time." I wanted to be recognized as one of those teams that they were looking at when I first got here. We were playing somebody in a tournament, I think it was Texas A&M, and a kid was all excited. And I said, "hey, we want people excited about playing us. We want to be Texas A&M, Miami, Florida, whoever it may be. Build our own identity." But I just think, right out of the shoot, we just flat out want to win championships.

**GG:** And during the time, you were responsible for the creation of Goss Stadium. I was speaking with Mike Parker last week and he had talked about you having certain specific goals for the field itself – specifically lights and things along those lines. What were some of the underpinnings of your goals for those?

**PC:** Well, first of all, I didn't think that we could get the players here – when the conference was going to go whole. When I first took over and Jack was coaching here, he was generally playing in the Northwest and the league was the

Northwest. There wasn't any interleague play at the time; the Pac didn't play one another. And so I knew if we were going to make this thing big, and I knew if we were going to get players from out of the region, we had to have something that was attractive. Because the ballpark was a historic ballpark, well-maintained, had unbelievable character, a great place to play. But really, there was no stadium to hold anybody. The bleachers were rotting out, the press box was coming apart, they wheeled in a little box for the ticket stand on gameday. So we needed to build a stadium.

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So the first thing I did was start meeting some people that could help me do that; people who had the capacity to introduce me to people that could help us do that. And there were people that were tied to our program. And fortunately, that happened and we were able to put what is now the finest ballpark in the Pac-12 conference.

**GG:** A couple years ago, I had the privilege of interviewing Ann and Norb Wellman and they spoke of developing a relationship with you and helping the construction of Goss Stadium. Do you have a particular memory of Norb or Ann?

**PC:** Boy, both of them. First of all, unbelievable people. I think that I could tell you several things about Norb, one was his generosity and willingness to help. Ann was just, they were just absolutely what people should want to be as a couple. They enjoyed one another, they both loved the outdoors. Ann was so supportive of what Norb wanted to do with baseball. Every time we had a function, it seemed like she would be there, supporting Norb and his efforts to do it. But just the time that Norb gave to help me put together this group of people that were going to raise the funds. We put together a financial committee, we would meet at his office in downtown Portland. I gave Norb, one time, a poster, and I think it really almost brought a tear to his eye, because Norb had a lot of things, Norb was a very successful man, and I think this really meant something to him.

But the fondest memory I have is of Norb sitting in the dugout in 2005 at the World Series. Because he had played there in 1952; he was on the World Series teams. So he was there with us, and I looked down and he was sitting there, and he was such a humble man. It was a great memory.

**GG:** How would you describe the early years of the 2000s for the Beavers?

**PC:** Transition. We were facing Barry Zito and Mark Prior and every other big leaguer that was at Stanford and USC and Arizona and Arizona State. And here we were, I guess going up to the bully and telling him, "we're going to fight you." That didn't sit very well with some people. I know we swept UCLA one year and they were a little unhappy about that. They had several big leaguers on that team; that team was extremely impressive, and we swept them. And their coach is just a great man, Gary Adams, but I can remember late in the game we hit one of their players, Eric Valent. He had hit thirty-some home runs that year, and it wasn't intentional, but they were pretty fired up about it because the new guy on the block was starting to mark his territory.

I just think you really had to fight back then. We were just always a pitcher or an extra player away from making a move. I remember we played USC in, I think it was 2001, and we had to win two of three to get in a regional. And we lost the first game to Mark Prior in extra innings, then we gave up one run in the next two games – in eighteen innings, we gave up one run – and we lost. We won on Saturday, 6-0, and we got beat 1-0 on Sunday, and we didn't go to a regional. That hurt. And all three of their starters ended up being big leaguers. It was a fight, but there was also light at the end of the tunnel. There were also guys saying, "ok, we can do this." It was a tough time.

**GG:** In 2005, you made your first appearance in the College World Series, the second in the school's history. What were some of your goals and your mindset at the beginning of that season?

**PC:** Win a championship. But I can tell you that when you're thinking about winning a championship, you're certainly not, in the back of your mind, thinking you're going to go to Omaha all in the same shot. We kind of hit the jackpot all at once: we won the Pac-12 championship, we won the regional championship, we won the super-regional championship, and we went to the College World Series. And for a team that hadn't been to a regional in a long time, it was a shot heard around the country, that's for sure. And it kind of put us on the national scene. Like I said, we felt like we continued to get to where we wanted to be, or getting closer, but that particular year was the statement that we were able to make

nationally, that we were there. And I think that the thing that is most impressive about that to me is the fact that guys weren't satisfied, when we got back, with just being there. They wanted to go back and they wanted to win.

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**GG:** In my research of the 110 years of the team, I've noticed that's there's a historic bias in Pac-12 baseball in preference to the southern teams. During the 2005 season, did you feel like the Beavers were fighting that favoritism?

**PC:** Absolutely. I mean, there were years that I can tell you that we didn't get in – '98 was a perfect example. We played nine games against the south, they weren't conference games, but we swept UCLA, swept Arizona, went down and beat USC at USC one of three, so we were 7-2 against the south. I think we had thirty-eight wins that year; we don't even go to a regional. So the bias was unbelievable. It was, "they don't play baseball in the north. They're good guys, they're good teams, but they can never play with the teams in the six Pac in particular." That was also a message that was sent to us when we started having a dialogue with the coaches in the south – and nice guys too – but, "hey, we're the six Pac. You guys don't know what you're getting into; this is different. This is Arizona State and USC and UCLA and Stanford back-to-back. You're probably not aware of what it's like." And maybe at first we weren't. But there's only two things you can do when you get hit in the face: one is run and one is swing back. And I think that we made a pretty good statement as to what we wanted to be, starting in the early 2000s.

**GG:** When do you think the chemistry got going for that 2005 team?

**PC:** Almost immediately. I think it even got started a little bit at the end of the 2004 season when we were so close and we had a lot of guys coming back. Those guys were sophomores, those pitching – Nickerson and Gunderson and Buck, that group of guys, it was a fun group of guys to have. And then we had Canham behind the plate; we had to convert him back there. So I think that chemistry started to hash a little bit at the end of the 2004 season.

**GG:** Do you have a particular memory of Jacoby Ellsbury?

**PC:** Yeah. The kid could run. I remember when he first got here, there were a lot of things he couldn't do, but the one thing he could do is really, really run. Everything about him revolved around his ballistic, his quick-twitch fibers. He was able to do things quickly, run fast. He really wasn't a polished baseball player. He played at a real small school. But his desire to be the best and his work ethic, man, you could go in the weight room and find him; the batting cage and find him. He really, really put the work in; he really wanted to be great.

**GG:** Was there a particular point in the 2005 season where you believed that the Beavers had the potential to be national contenders?

**PC:** Oh, I think that there were times in the 2005 season where I thought that we could beat anybody in our conference. We were good. But we were also really, really young in the process of what was happening around the rest of the country. At that time, I didn't worry about what Florida was doing or what Miami was doing or Texas. I was worried about what SC, Stanford, Oregon State were doing. That really never crossed my mind too much.

What did cross my mind was the fact that we got about sixty-percent into the season, in the conference, and I said, "you know what guys? We can win this thing. We can win this conference." And I think we were picked sixth or something going in, so it was a pretty good run.

**GG:** And you mentioned USC. Historically, OSU has had a strong rivalry against USC and at the end of the season, there was a three-game series where the winner was determined to go to the College World Series. Do you have a particular memory of that series?

**PC:** Are you talking about to finish the league? Or in the super-regional?

**GG:** The super-regional.

**PC:** Well, there are some memories that make me a little queasy even right now. They had a guy on the mound, and I can't remember the name of the guy right now for the life of me, he's pitching in the big leagues – Ian Kennedy. And

Ian Kennedy threw against Dallas Buck on Friday in conference, and it was a really tight game. I don't know who, but somebody hit a home run – I think it might have been Andy Jenkins – but somebody hit a home run and we ended up winning the league by winning that series. So lo and behold, we play in a regional here, they play in a regional at Long Beach, and they win the regional and come back up here in the super-regional.

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So here we go again, it's Round 2, Ian Kennedy against Buck. Really, really good game and we won. On Saturday, the second game, we had the game won. And my right fielder was a guy named Danny Anderson, and at that time we had a cinder track out there. A guy hit a fly ball to right and he went back to catch it, and his knee kind of buckled, and the ball hit off the heel of his glove and he dropped it, and it was a big, big play. And Ryan Gipson, my second baseman, decided he didn't want Danny to feel bad, so he dropped a pop-up. So we had some uncharacteristic errors that happened in that game, and they came back and beat us. So of course, after the game, everybody was thinking, "USC, tradition, winners. Oregon State's never been there and this is so sad, Oregon State had it won and now they're never going to win." And so I remember after the game I said, "guys, if we're as good as we think we are and as good as we know we are, we can pack our bags and get ready to go to Omaha. Because we didn't get beat tonight, we just beat ourselves. We made some mistakes we don't usually make. Tomorrow we'll come out and show them who we are," and we did.

That memory of that series – Andy Jenkins hit for the cycle on the last day, we had to put up ten runs to win, we won 10-8. But the biggest pitch in that entire game was a freshman: Eddie Kunz came in and struck out Clement – Jeff Clement, who was about the third pick in the nation – a left-handed hitter with the bases loaded. He threw him a 3-2 splitty, ninety-three miles an hour and struck him out. And that was the biggest pitch of the game.

**GG:** How did Beaver Nation react to you going to the College World Series for the first time in over fifty years?

**PC:** Crazy. It was awesome. I mean, first of all, we had a bunch of people in shock. And second of all, we had a bunch of people that were really excited that they had something that they could attach to Oregon State. Beaver Nation had been starving for a long time for something that they – I think the 2000 football team that went to the Fiesta Bowl was the first time in a long time that, nationally, there was something that had happened since Ralph Miller's basketball teams. So that part was really cool and we certainly got a lot of recognition and publicity. Beaver Nation, they were on fire, that's for sure.

**GG:** Earlier you mentioned Norb Wellman. Did you have any contact with any of the other players from the '52 team?

**PC:** Probably. I can't remember. I know that there was a guy that came back – that didn't go back there, but that came to the super-regional, I believe that he was on that '52 World Series team. They actually had a little reunion for those guys too, I don't know what year it was, but I got a chance to meet a couple of those guys. So yeah, I think there was another guy that was involved with that, but I honestly don't remember at this time who it was.

**GG:** What was going through your mind when you attended the opening ceremonies at Rosenblatt Stadium in Omaha?

**PC:** Just thankful, blessed. I looked at those guys and just thought, "wow man, these guys have brought me on this journey." It was like a reward for something that had all dreamed about. It was surreal but it was also, I felt like our kids earned it, but I also felt like, "did I ever sit down and ever see myself standing in Rosenblatt, listening to the national anthem in uniform?" I had two guys, Bert Babb and Paul Marriott, who went back and brought me back a little vial of dirt and a College World Series hat, probably around 2002, and said, "you've got to go back there. It's amazing." And I just thought, "you know what, I'm not going unless our team goes." So I had never been there. And so it was mind-blowing to be back there and see the whole thing, and then to actually be one of the participants was pretty cool.

**GG:** In 2005, the Beavers were eliminated from the College World Series after losing to Baylor by a score of 3-4. Do you have any memories of that game or that series?

**PC:** Yeah, I do. Gipson getting thrown out at the plate, when he shouldn't have. We had nobody out and we shouldn't have brought him. I remember Gundy coming in and giving up a hit off the end of the bat that never left the infield. I remember Jenkins, who just drove in runs all the time, and had a couple opportunities, and it seemed like he just couldn't get a pitch to handle; I think he grounded into a double play. I just felt like we were tight. I felt like we needed to win a

game. If we had won a game, that team, that '05 team, I think was more talented or as talented in proportion to that '07 team. And I think if we could have just won a game, we could have got deep into the World Series, but I just think we were a little tight. I just remember that it was an unbelievable experience.

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**GG:** The Beavers opened the 2006 season in the top ten pre-season polls, with *Collegiate Baseball* placing them as high as number three. Were there any particular goals or things in mind going into that season?

**PC:** Yeah, get back to Omaha, win a championship. There was nothing on our mind other than getting back to Omaha. And it was difficult, because Jenkins was one of our big time leaders and he was gone. We lost a couple players on the team, but he was a guy that really, really was kind of the glue that kept us together, because Darwin was a freshman and Shea was a new player, and Gippy and Kunda – Gippy was a new guy and Kunda was a young guy. Jacoby was gone; Jacoby was the MVP of the league in 2005, he was gone. So those two things were, we had to replace those guys and that was huge. One guy was the number one run, he scored the most runs, and the other guy was the biggest run producer. So that was a big part of our offense.

**GG:** The best way to describe the end of the '06 season was saying you were on a hot streak. Author Cliff Kirkpatrick has stated in his book, "after losing a series to Arizona State at the tail end of the season, the Beavers ignited, winning nine out of ten games on the road to the College World Series." What was going through your mind as coach during that time?

**PC:** Well first of all, we struggled in conference that year. We took Joe Patterson and named him a starter, then we named him a reliever. We had a kid named Jorge Reyes who was a freshman, we named him a starter – took him out of the bullpen, named him a starter. You talking about losing – the '06 team, we lost Gundy, Buck, Nickerson, McFeeley, Gillespie, Graham. You name him, we lost him. Billy Rowe. It was incredible the number of people we lost. Dallas Buck obviously was as good as anybody in the league. The thing we had for us in '07 was we had leadership with Darwin Barney and Mitch Canham. And Mitch Canham was the guy that, he would fight anybody. Darwin was another type of leader. I always say, if we went into a village and stormed the village, Canham was wiping them all out and Darwin was saying, "hey, I've got to wipe you out but I'm going to leave you a med kit." So they both had great leadership ability and both led in different ways, but those two guys, when the thing got down a little bit, are the ones that carried us through.

**GG:** Now, in '06, you go back to Omaha and at the beginning, Mike Parker talks about the first trip to Omaha being this sort of, taking in the awe of it – Mike Parker actually talks about chasing fireflies and this concept of the whole atmosphere and the novelty of it. Going back for the second time, what was going through your mind?

**PC:** Win it.

**GG:** Win it?

**PC:** Absolutely win it. We've been here, done that. We like the candy store, we like Old Town, we like Omaha Prime and we like the fireworks show, but let's play baseball.

**GG:** How would you describe that first game of the '06 College World Series against Miami?

**PC:** Painful.

**GG:** Painful.

**PC:** We got our butt kicked. I felt for the guys because I knew we needed to win a game. And I said that about the '05 team, we just needed to win a game. I never felt any pressure in Omaha ever, other than playing Georgia in the eighth inning when they had guys on. Because if we would have lost that, we would have been the first team ever in history of the College World Series to lose six straight games in Omaha. And of course, I wasn't born in 1952, but I was going to get credit for that. So that would have been miserable. That was the only time I ever felt for the guys, because I knew how good they were and I knew how much pressure they were putting on themselves. We tried and tried and tried to get them relax and just play, and really ultimately it came down to us winning one game that we took off. It was quite a deal beating Georgia, I can tell you that.

**GG:** And then they went on to beat Miami and went up against Rice University, and eventually went on to play the Tar Heels for the national championship. In the first game of that series, the Tar Heels edged the Beavers by a score of 4-3. What was going through your mind? What was your reaction to that first game?

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**PC:** Well first of all, we knew we had two more, but I thought we needed to do a better job offensively. You're facing two guys or three guys that were going to pitch in the big leagues eventually; they had an unbelievable pitching staff. I was pleased that we kept the score down. I mean, they were pretty good; they had a pretty – not a pretty good, they had a great club. But there wasn't any part of me that didn't feel like we could come back and win. Certainly we wanted to win the game, certainly we were disappointed, but the only time I really felt down was when we were down 5-0 in the second game. I was a little disappointed in the fact that we weren't getting after Woodward a little bit better, he was on the mound. And I felt like, at that point in time, we needed somebody to ignite us a little bit. And of course, Billy Rowe did that with a three-run homer.

**GG:** The series goes to three games in which the Beavers win. What was your first reaction after the first out was made in the College World Series, becoming national champions?

**PC:** I get asked that question a lot and if I could tell you what was exactly on my mind, I think I'd be a genius, because there are so many things that go through your mind. But when the ninth inning started, there actually was a calm. It was like, "you know, we've been here for thirteen, fourteen days. We've faced six elimination games. This our eighth game, we're exhausted, we've played our tail off, we've played tremendous. We're playing for a national championship and it's going to be over. I've got the right guy in the bullpen with Gundy, I've got the right guy on the mound with Buck starting." I think the minute it was over, the first thing on my mind was almost relief that there was going to be a period of time now where the mind and the body could rest. But it was such a long journey to get there, it wasn't just something that was crazy awesome. It was just like, "we did it."

**GG:** How did Beaver Nation celebrate this unprecedented accomplishment in the team's, at the time, ninety-nine-year history?

**PC:** I'm assuming they invested in some barley and hops; probably toasted everybody you could toast. I'm sure they had a good time, which they should have. I've heard some stories about Monroe Street being crazy upside-down, and we saw some video of some people in Portland at some establishments. We know back there what they did, because they were all in the hotel. So when we got back, it was a wild scene. You don't win very many national championships in a major sport, that's for sure.

**GG:** Certainly not. Were there any parades or parties?

**PC:** Oh yeah, when we got back and we landed, the Portland Fire Department and shot water over the plane. And we went down to Pioneer Square and there had to be 15, 20,000 people there. They took us back to Corvallis in limousines. We got to Parker Plaza here and there were thousands of people. It was a tremendous celebration.

**GG:** In 2007, as you pointed out, you experienced difficulty during the regular season. In returning to the College World Series for the third year in a row, the Beavers lose to Virginia and then they never lost another game throughout the College World Series. What do you think was key to the Beavers success?

**PC:** Well, Darwin Barney, Mitch Canham and Joe Patterson probably had a lot to do with it, their leadership. And there were other guys, obviously. But I just think there was such a confidence of what we could do and what we were going to do, that we never flinched. I actually felt, when we got back to Virginia, that we would win the regional. Even after we lost a game. And once we beat Virginia the first time, I said, "we're not going to lose again this year." That team had a rhythm about them and got going like, it was crazy. Stutesy, JoPa, we took Lonnie Lechelt and played him at third base. Of course, Darwin and Joey up the middle, with Lennerton at first base. Chris Hopkins was in center field and John Wallace was a starter for us for a long time. We just had such a great rhythm of what we were doing, the chemistry and the confidence and the tempo which we were playing at was the best that I've ever experienced for that long of a time in such high-stakes games.



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**GG:** Do you have any particular memories of that '07 national championship series?

**PC:** Yeah, it was how confident we were that we weren't going to get beat. I mean, the year before it was like you were in a fifteen-round heavyweight fight every day that you walked out there. And in '07, it was like, "you know what guys? Let's get this thing done early so we can go eat. Let's just play as smooth as we can." It was a completely and total different feeling. There was no pressure, there was nothing but just an absolute confidence that just exuded from that dugout and from every guy on the team.

**GG:** You've made a remarkable journey from building the program in '95 to 2007, winning your second consecutive national championship. As Oregon State approaches its 150-year anniversary, do you have any thoughts or hopes for the team or the Athletic Department?

**PC:** Win championships, that's what it's all about when you get on the field. There are a lot of things that we do off the field that I think are tremendous. You talk about some of the things we do out in the community, you talk about Beavers Without Borders, you talk about kids getting into the big leagues or other athletes advancing in their profession. But when you get in between the white lines: winning championships. And I think we've got great people in the department, we've got great people within the baseball program, and that's our goal.

**GG:** What are your plans for the future?

**PC:** In baseball?

**GG:** Yes, sir.

**PC:** Coach right here, win championships, produce men and see guys grow and develop, and see them later in life. One of the most rewarding things, I think for any coach, is when you see a guy ten years down the road and him having success. And it doesn't always have to be in the big leagues, it can be in the classroom, it can be running a business, it can be just being a father. Getting a call back from a guy, getting a text from somebody; those things are extremely rewarding. Our alumni personnel has grown huge. Jake Quiring has really helped out, starting this alumni group and, with Andy Jenkins help, brought a lot of alumni back to go to baseball games, have barbecues, have a golf tournament. Trying to make sure that we can keep these guys connected to the program, connected to Oregon State. That part's really rewarding.

I want to see the stadium grow more; I want to see some more things at the stadium. We put together a players' lounge and raised about \$125,000 in thirty days. We want Beaver Nation to rally around the things we want to do to finish the ballpark, and one of those things is to remodel the Omaha Room and build over the visitors' pen with another deck – a student section – and put a permanent home in right field; we bring bleachers in now for the season. But it is the best place to watch a game and we want to make sure that we continue to have it as one of those venues that people want to come to and watch a game, and that it's fan friendly and it's an enjoyable place to bring someone to watch a baseball game.

**GG:** Outstanding, and I wish you all the best with that. Chris?

**CP:** Yeah, a few follow-up questions and a couple macro-level questions as well. It's very clear that an important moment for the program came about with the unification of the conference in the early 2000s. Can you give some insight into how that happened and how it started to lessen this bias that we talked about against the Northwest schools?

**PC:** Yeah, I think after we didn't get in – well, first of all, we were good in '97 as well. But I started talking to some coaches in the north about, "we need to unify and try to push this," and we were getting no traction with the coaches in the south. We went to the ADs and, of course, the ADs in the north were in favor, but nobody was going to go out on a limb, and the ADs in the south didn't care. It wasn't until we got the presidents involved that we could push their hand and force their hand. And then Mike Gillespie, I've got to give Mike Gillespie – the head coach at USC – a lot of credit. He was the one guy in the south that said, "you know, it might not be good for USC but it's good for the Pac-10," at the time it was the Pac-10, "and I think we need to listen." So I give him a lot of credit for standing up, and the other guys were great guys too. I just think that if I was in the south as a coach, I probably wouldn't want to go to Pullman, Washington and play a baseball game when I can go to Palo Alto or Tucson.

So that part was where it started, and it took a lot of pushing and prodding. I was probably the lead guy in the north; I had a little bit of support from Kenny Knutson at UW, but other than that, really there wasn't a whole lot of support, so I was kind of the Lone Ranger on that. At the time, my AD was Dutch Baughman and he was, "yeah, hey that's good, let's push it a little bit," but he didn't have a lot of bullets, being up here in the north. And then we got the presidents involved and it really helped.

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**CP:** A couple questions about players. When I think back on the 2006 run in the College World Series, the player who stands out to me as having been almost a heroic figure was Jonah Nickerson. Can you talk a little bit about his performance?

**PC:** I can't even explain what type of warrior he was during that World Series. And the thing about him is he's just so strong and so healthy, and he was so well taken care of throughout the year, that when you got there, he was able to go on short days' rest because of the fact that he was in such great shape physically. The only thing that bothered him, really, was his back and his legs. But if there's anything I would say about that, it would just be, that's how you win championships. People doing things that they're not supposed to do; extraordinary efforts by people like Jonah Nickerson, having the will and the courage to go out there. Because he knew that if he went out there on three-days rest instead of five, or whatever it was, that he wasn't going to have the same velocity, and there's a chance that maybe he got hit or a chance that he isn't very good. And he was willing to do that where I think that sometimes there's people that have a concern like, "well, I might not be sharp, I might get knocked around," there's a little fear in them. He was a courageous warrior.

**CP:** When we interviewed Chris Kunda last fall, I asked him what it was like to share the middle of the infield with Darwin Barney, and he said that the thing that he remembered was that Darwin never stopped talking.

**PC:** Yeah. [laughs] Well Kunda never talked, so somebody had to talk; had to have some kind of communication. Chris Kunda was maybe one of the most unassuming players in the country, because there is no doubt that he was the best defensive second baseman in the nation. That guy could do things that he didn't even know how he did it. Chris grew up in Philomath, liked baseball, but really never put in a whole lot of effort as far as when he got here, he liked it, he liked to play, he was going to do it. But he was so gifted. He was unbelievably gifted at his position, it was unbelievable. And then he was a better hitter than people thought too.

He was a really fun kid to coach, but never really thought, I don't think, very highly of himself when he came here. I remember when I recruited him he said, "well, you know, maybe I'll go to Linn-Benton because then I can play." I said, "well, you don't even know if you can play here or not until you come try out and do it." So he came in as a freshman and he was like, "wow, this guy defensively is outstanding." And I remember Terry Stephenson telling me – his high school coach – "hey, this guy's pretty good." And of course Chris was a guy that we had to chase around a little bit after his freshman year, because he was a hard guy to make sure that he stayed on task. And once he realized he had a chance to be pretty good, it was a lot different. But he was a wonderful player.

**CP:** Can you tell us a bit about Darwin as a personality?

**PC:** Oh, Darwin had the best personality in the world. I mean, Darwin made me enjoy the game; he really did. I've got to give him a lot of credit. I can remember one time, he's out there BS-ing with the opponent at second base; we're on defense, a guy comes in to second, and I look out there and go, "what do you got going on man? You guys going to go out to dinner or what?" And Darwin comes in and taps me, "hey coach, we got 'em, don't worry about it." He was awesome. He made me relax. I think he appreciated – he knew what my motor was and he knew how intense I was. And I think he was intense also, he was intense in a different way. I think he was able to gear me down a little bit and he was also able to understand me better. He's one of the first guys that ever kind of went out of his way to have fun with my intensity level and actually help me enjoy the game. He was a squirrel, see. I still text him today, he pitched the other day and gave up a home run. I said, "what's up man? What's with the breaking ball?" He was one of the funnest guys I've ever coached.

**CP:** We've made passing reference to the weather here and the stereotype that a Northwest team could never win because of the weather. How has this program accommodated playing in a rainy climate?

**PC:** Well, we talk about you create your own environment. If it's wet and you think it's wet, it's wet. If it's wet and you think it's just fine, it's just fine. If it's too hot, it's too hot. I've been to Phoenix and I got on that bus and we played in 104 on Mother's Day, 2006, and I said, "you know what guys? We get to go home; they have to stay." So there's days I'd rather be sitting in the sun somewhere, but I can tell you that you create your own environment. Corvallis is – this is the best play to play a baseball game because of the atmosphere of the ballpark. There's nobody in the league that will question that. There's nobody that can duplicate what we can do in our stadium, and the dedication of our fans to come and support us and how rabid they are about their Beavers, and it makes it a special place. I can't tell you how many players that I've talked to that are out of baseball and played against us, that tell me, "coach, when we went there, it was awesome. Some of our guys were intimidated, but it was awesome." And it could be Pace [?] from USC, who was in Andrew Susac's wedding, who I saw. It could be a lot of guys. But the weather is just whatever you think it is. I imagine if you were from somewhere near Puno Bay, you're probably thinking it's a pretty good place to be in the wintertime, you know?

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**CP:** A question about recruiting. Particularly as the program's profile rose over the course of time, I'm sure you were able to get into some living rooms you hadn't been before. But baseball is fairly unique in that high school players, commonly the best ones go straight to professional baseball. How does the staff calibrate its recruiting class in making sure that you have blue chip players versus players who may not be going pro directly? How are you going to balance out your roster every year?

**PC:** Well, it's a crapshoot. I mean, it really is. There are times where you can pretty much look at a guy and go, "hey, he could be a high profile guy. Hey, he could be a high draft pick." You can try to get a feel for what their signability is. Do they want to sign? How much money do they want? What's their willingness to go? Obviously, the more we won, the more people didn't sign, the more a guy would ask for more money to sign. Typically, if you were in the late '90s, and a guy got offered \$50,000 you would lose him. Now, a guy might be saying, "I don't want to sign unless I can get a million dollars," so those things have changed. And they see the success that college players are having in professional baseball, they see the experience. They've had a chance to watch us play on t.v., they know they have a chance to play in Omaha. So it's changed that entire environment.

**CP:** And sort of on the flipside of that, it's very common as well for players to leave after their junior year. What are the kinds of conversations, or the rules of thumb, that you try to provide to your players as they're thinking about that?

**PC:** If it's the best thing for you to do, I support you. I don't get involved with that very often; very few guys do I ever really sit down and talk about, "hey, are you sure that's a good decision?" You look at Mitch Canham, he came back for his senior year and he ended up being a first round pick. Cole Gillespie came back for his senior year, MVP of the league, third round pick, playing in the big leagues. Mike Stutes came back, pitched in the big leagues. Travis Eckert this year came back and was one of our best guys. So I certainly think there are guys that should sign, there's no question about it. Our goal is to have kids sign when they're a junior because that meant they went high in the draft. What I don't like to see is I don't like to see juniors leave when there's not a great opportunity for them there, it's just to fill a roster. And I think if they come back they can better themselves and they can help themselves, not only position themselves in the draft, but what they do academically, get closer to their degree, whatever it may be. But it depends on the kid. I've had discussions with kids where I've encouraged them to sign, I've had discussions with kids where I've said, "hey, think about it." So I think it depends on the situation and the kid and the opportunity that's out there for them.

**CP:** As the season gets going and you get into the conference series, you finish up on a Sunday, then you have a week to prepare, then you start up again the following Friday. What is the staff's approach to preparing a team and preparing for the teams that are coming up in the next three-game series?

**PC:** Well, it's different facets of how you prepare. What's our opponent? What do we face in our opponent? And what are their strengths, offensively and defensively? And where are we at physically and mentally? Who's nicked? Who's swinging the bat good and who's not? What are our practice sessions going to have to be like? The things that we do in practice are consistent. How long we do them and drills we do depend on who we're playing and how we're performing. If we're having a little trouble doing the things that we typically do well defensively, we may do a little more fundamental work defensively. If we're having trouble in the short game, we may work a little more on the short game. But I think each week presents itself with a new challenge, but the fundamentals of the game never change. Coaching baseball is not

difficult. It's getting the guy to do things at a higher level than he thinks he can do. Those are things that are difficult. But as far as teaching a guy how to field and throw and bunt a baseball, almost everybody can do that. Teaching him to do it at a level that lets you win and doing it at a level which is far beyond what they ever dreamed they could do, that's the challenge.

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**CP:** What kind of scouting infrastructure do you have?

**PC:** The scouting is limited because you can't go out and scout. Everybody's on t.v. now, so you've got all kinds of video. So usually you get a chance to sit and watch a team play four or five games on tape before you play. Most guys, you knew the year before. We go over the tape, the pitching coach spends a lot of time talking to them about their hitters, how we're going to pitch them. We talk about the pitchers were going to face as an offensive group. We talk about the things they like to do – are they aggressive on the bases? Do they like to play the short game? Are they early swingers? Things like that. But we try to focus on what we do, and try to do the things that we do better from one week to the next.

**CP:** We've talked about the growth of the stadium and obviously that requires fundraising. How much of your time is devoted to that?

**PC:** There was a lot of it – too much – at one time. To be honest with you, I think that's one area where we'd love to get some help from the university and from our Athletic Department, in how we go about fundraising. And I think that, in fairness to them, they've had a big challenge with the lack of funding in the state, to how we do things. And so I think we have to get creative. I think with Todd's new system; I think that's really going to help. We've already had some help from Zack Lassiter, when we worked with Learfield to put up a new scoreboard. Certainly I think the coach should be involved, certainly I think the players and the program need to be involved. I think we're at a point now where it's not quite as difficult. When I first got here, Dutch just said, "yeah, if you can raise some money, go ahead." He never dreamed we'd raise the money. So I'm pounding the pavement pretty hard between here and Portland and Salem and Seattle and Sacramento and wherever, Bend, and "it's great man, keep it going." So now there's much more of an awareness about how that can be a source of revenue for us. What used to be, "come on in, you can sit wherever you want," is now, "hey, I can't get a ticket." So I think they've recognized that as a source of revenue. I also think, like I said, that Todd has some real creative people that he's bringing in that want to get involved with that. It's not a complaint; it's just, I think, a lack of personnel that we've had maybe, a lack of help. I would think that thing's going to get a lot better.

**CP:** That sort of segues into my last question for you. This is a sesquicentennial project and we've been talking to people about where they think the university is positioned as it heads towards 2018. As a member of the Athletic Department, you've been here for quite a long time. How do you feel about OSU's positioning relative to its peers in the Pac-12?

**PC:** Well, I don't know what our peers are doing too much, because I've got my head buried here pretty good. I think Oregon State proved what they could do when they went out with a capital campaign and raised over a billion dollars, and I think their original goal was \$600 million or \$700 million. There is no question that we can raise funds here if we decide that that's what we want to do. I think they're getting ready for another capital campaign to be honest with you, I'm not quite sure, but I think the Athletic Department should be – if they're not already – should be a part of that capital campaign. I mean, I think it's very difficult when the Athletic Department is in a position where the sole source of "go out and find the funds to expand your football stadium, your basketball arena, your practice arena, your baseball field, your softball field, your track," that's a tough deal for one guy to handle all by himself. I think that with the success, the tremendous success, that President Ray and the committee and the donors had with the capital campaign, that they recognized that we can do that.

And I think that that would take a lot of pressure off of the Athletic Department to do some things that are important with athletes, with academics, with things that athletes need, if you didn't have so many people out trying to raise funds to build more locker room space. This venue for football, it's going to be tremendous. I think they've found a way to tie that in for another revenue source and obviously attract athletes to come here. We built the Sports Performance Center over here and have sort of outgrown that. Jimmy keeps winning wrestling championships and he's got a nice practice facility, so that program continues to boss – like many others, look what we're doing in women's basketball. So I just think that those things go hand in hand – facilities, success, all those things. I don't think you can go through this thing and think, "hey,

we're going to maintain the success we have" if we don't enhance our facilities. If you look around the conference at who has just remodeled their basketball arena, their football facilities, their baseball facilities, it's going crazy now because of the television exposure were getting. So if we don't try to stay on the cutting edge and don't try to stay ahead of this thing, it's going to be, I think, more detrimental trying to raise those funds after you've slipped. Let's not slip.

Last year's success here in athletics and in the Athletic Department were unprecedented as a whole. So let's move forward; let's not get complacent and say, "yeah, the coaches will go out and they'll win," let's find a reason to get the athlete that was maybe going to go to SC, if it's down to SC and Oregon State, come to Oregon State. Let's find that athlete that was going to go to Arizona or Oregon State and went to Arizona. What do we have to do to get him here? Let's improve on those things, in whatever areas they are.

**CP:** Pat, thank you very much.

**PC:** You got it.

**CP:** This has been a lot of fun. Best of luck going forward.

**PC:** Awesome, I'll take all the luck I can get.

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