BRINGING HIS GAME TO CAL POLY

TIM WALSH WANTS TO MAKE FOOTBALL GAMES ‘MUST-SEE’ EVENTS

BY STACIA MOMBURG
It’s not news that Tim Walsh loves football. Cal Poly’s new head football coach has a career record of 117-82 in 18 seasons. But ask Walsh about his greatest success, and he’ll tell you it’s his family.

The 54-year-old father of Luke (28), Casey (26), Sean (24) and Megan (20) has been married to his wife, Jody, for 31 years. Jody has been an inspiration in my pursuit of my career.

Walsh remembers a conversation when he and Jody were newly married, telling her that he could make a living at coaching. “She told me to go do it. So I did.”

One might think spending six months of the year working seven days a week would take a toll on a spouse. Jokingly Walsh says, “Maybe that’s what kept us together.” Seriously, though, this is a really tough profession. Jody is alone a lot. Thankfully she really understands my love of the game,” he said.

In fact, the entire family understands Walsh’s love for the game and has managed to make it work. His long stint as head coach for Portland State University in Oregon enabled all four children to graduate from the same high school. While most college football coaches lead a gypsy lifestyle, Walsh was able to plant his family in Oregon long enough to be able to call it home.

He also managed to sign Sean at Portland State, with Luke being a walk-on. What would it say about me as a coach if couldn’t sign my own kids, Walsh said with a chuckle.

continued
It should be no surprise that the entire Walsh clan is athletic. Jody was a snow skier and competitive water skier. Luke, Sean and Casey all played baseball and football in high school, and Sean also wrestled. Megan played softball, basketball and volleyball in high school and currently plays softball for the University of San Diego.

Walsh played sports until he was 24. The former football, basketball and baseball player admits that by playing three sports year after year, he didn't give himself an opportunity to excel at one. "I was a quarterback, played third base and point guard." When asked if he fancied himself a type of Bo Jackson, Walsh laughed. "Sure, at the opposite end of the athletic scale."

Walsh's inherent love of family spills over into his approach to football. "I'm enthralled with the game. I love being involved in the game, along with the number of people who come together to accomplish a common goal, never ceases to amaze me."

At 18, Walsh knew that the only way to stay involved in athletics was to coach. By 23, after coaching various sports for a few years, Walsh says he realized he enjoyed coaching football most of all.

"I'm enthralled with the game. A lot of people don't realize how intense the game is both mentally and physically. A player's mind is constantly strategizing while down after down their body is intense the game is both mentally and physically. A player's mind is constantly strategizing while down after down their body is.

Walsh's inherent love of family spills over into his approach with his players. When asked what he likes most about coaching Walsh's hope for Cal Poly football? "My goal is to bring players' growth. I absolutely love watching them succeed."

Walsh will also tell you that in his 31 years coaching he's made friends for life. Those friendships are evident in his choices for assistant coaches. So far he's hired five -- three played under him at Portland State, two coached for him at Portland, and the third coached with him at West Point. "These are great guys with a good work ethic. I trust they'll bring their best to Cal Poly's players."

Creg Lapte, hired as a defensive coordinator, loved playing for Walsh. "He made us work hard but also allowed us to have fun. I agreed to coach for Tim because he knows how to make his players feel important, and he knows what it takes to win." New offensive coordinator Saga Tuttle echoes Lapte's sentiment. "He was about getting the job done and having fun."

Tuttle calls Walsh a player's coach. "As a player, I knew Tim cared about me as an individual. He helped me grow not only as a player but as a man. I believe in him as a person and as a coach."

Both new coaches agree that Walsh is here to win. "I came to Cal Poly to coach for Tim because he knows what it takes to win," says Lapte. "He's a proven winner, and winning is the main reason we play and coach football," said Tuttle.

And Walsh's hope for Cal Poly football? "My goal is to bring the game to the larger community and make a home game at Cal Poly a Saturday night, must-see event."

WHAT TO CALL HIM: "Call me Tim. Not Coach Walsh. I'm a person, not my career."

FAVORITE MOVIE: "My kids would tell you every movie I've ever seen. But I think right now it's the DaVinci Code."

FAVORITE FOOTBALL MOVIE: "The Longest Yard" (2005) -- "Because Juston Wood (his new wide­receiver coach and former Portland State player) was the stand in for Adam Sandler. Anytime there was a shot of a well­thrown ball or a shot of Adam Sandler getting hit, that was Juston."

He also loves "Brian's Song." "It really represents the loyalty, friendship, fellowship, talent and determination that is inherent in football."


FAVORITE FOOD: "Italian."

FAVORITE DRINK: "Diet Pepsi."

HOW HE SPENDS A SUNDAY: "On the golf course with my wife. She loves golf."

FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT SAN LUIS OBISPO SO FAR: "The ocean and golf. I hear there are some really great golf courses in SLO County."