

## **Jim Collins Presser**

### **Opening statement...**

“Well I guess I’m going to put this (SVSU hat) on. Thanks for showing up first of all. I think this is a great setting to do this. I want to thank the media. I think that shows a lot on your part and more than anything I look forward to working with all of you over the next few years and getting to be really good friends with you and I think that’s important.

“I’d like to thank Dr. Gilbertson, the President of Saginaw Valley State University for giving me this opportunity and Mike Watson, our Athletic Director, at Saginaw Valley. I think this is an opportunity of a lifetime.

“What I was impressed with most when I did the interview was the people that I met and the tradition that I researched. I think Saginaw Valley has everything that it takes to be champions. That’s what I have come here to do and those are my intentions. I like to surround myself with people that have passion for excellence, and that’s here at Saginaw Valley State.

“Our goal as a football program is going to be simple. We’re going to try to develop every student athlete in our program to their fullest potential. That’s number one. I think that’s very important. I think the student athlete is why you get into coaching. I think developing the young men in your program is the most important thing that you can do as a football coach. That will be our number one goal.

“We’re going to stress team. We’re going to stress the team concept over individualism in our football program. We want to develop chemistry, comradery, and we’re going to have our players in an environment where they care for each other. There’s trust for each other. And when they look each other in the eye, they know that they can count on each other. That’s going to be number one.

“We’re going to work just as hard to develop team chemistry and comradery as we are talent. As I mentioned, that’s a key ingredient in a team sport like football; the key ingredient to success.

“We’re going to emphasize character and integrity with every person in our football program. We will be leaders around campus. We will be leaders in our community. We are looking for people that have those values and want to develop those values.

“We are looking for people that are selfless. We’re not looking for selfish individuals. We’re looking for team individuals. We’re looking for people that are going to care more about their teammates more than they care about themselves.

“Treating people the right way and doing things the right way are going to be the cornerstone of our thinking. We’re going to have a coaching staff that knows how to develop young men and are coaches on our staff because they care about young men, and

they care about young men first. They know the game, and they can teach the game; they can inspire, they can recruit, and they can motivate. But more important than anything else they are going to care about the individuals in our football program.

“We’re going to emphasize academics. And that’s one of the things we’ve done at Capital. We’re going to stress that our players are going to go to class. They’re going to sit in the front; they’re going to get engaged in the classroom. They’re going to get to know their professors. They’re going to study, and they’re going to compete. They’re going to take an active role in the academic environment at Saginaw Valley State.

“We’re going to emphasize a style of football that’s played with passion. We’re going to have fun. Football is a game. There is going to be an enthusiastic atmosphere on the practice field. There’s going to be an enthusiastic atmosphere on the game field, in the stadium and as we travel across this great league. We’re going to have some fun playing football, and they’re playing hard, and they’re going put forth great effort all the time. They are going to represent our University in a first class manner. And once again they are going to enjoy the experience of being a part of Saginaw Valley State football.

“We’re only going to going to recruit young men that fit our philosophy. We’re looking for good people. We’re looking for people that have academic goals and aspirations; that want to be the best they can be. We’re looking for people that want to be a part of a team and know that the team is special. That’s the type of person that we want to recruit to our program.

“What I want to be able to do is throw a blanket around this area right here. We’re not going to have any boundaries in terms of recruiting, but we are going to recruit our back yard. We’re going to recruit it aggressively. There’s a lot of great talent in this area right here, and we’re going to make a great effort to recruit it, but like I said we’re not going to set boundaries. We’re going to go after people that we think fit our philosophies; that we think are going to be great people, and are going to help us be as good as we can possibly be.

“We’re going to reach out to the high school coaches. We’re going to get involved in the high school coaches associations. We’re going to do whatever we can to accommodate the high school coaches, both in the area and around the state. And I think building those relationships with the coaches is going to be one of the most important things as far as recruiting is concerned. Getting the high school coach’s recommendations about the value and the character of the individuals in their program will be important in the evaluation of the players that we want in our program and who we want to recruit.

“We want to engage the campus community (the alumni and the people of this area) to be a part of our football program. I want the people in this area and around campus and our alumni to know the great things that our kids are doing in our in our football program. Not just the things that happen on the field (the touchdowns and the tackles and the statistics) but I want the community to know about the good citizenship that our guys are

involved with, and also the excellent academics that our guys are involved in. I think that's very important, and we're going to be very outgoing as far as that's concerned.

"I want to bring our football alumni into the fold at SVSU. We did that at Capital University and it worked out great for us. More importantly, I think it's very key that the present players and the former players have a connection, and that connection can evolve into something that's special. So we're going to work hard to bring the alumni back into the fold.

"We're going to win. We're going to win right now. I think there's great talent in this program. But we're not going to win at all costs. We're going to do it the right way. We're going to win with dignity and class. And when we walk off the field, we're going to know that we gave our best effort. Our goal is be 1-0 at the end of every week. At the end of every week we're going to evaluate if we were 1-0, and we are going to make the changes that it takes to learn from that experience, and we are going to bounce back and get right back to work. I think we're going to do it with a lot of energy and a lot of enthusiasm.

"As a coaching staff, at the end of our player's careers, we're going to want three things. And these are the three things that we're really going to focus on during the careers of our student athletes that come into contact with us:

"Number one, every single one of them to have a diploma; to get a degree from Saginaw Valley State.

"Number two, I want them to have a great experience in our program. Great memories. Develop great friendships and enjoy themselves and have fun playing a game around their teammates.

"And number three, a championship ring. If we can do those three things as a coaching staff, it will be one heck of a ride. I think the journey is so much more important than the end result. I think the experience we're going to have is something special, but their has to an end result that you're shooting for. And those are the things that we're shooting for.

"As you can see, I'm very passionate about this. I'm very excited to be here. I have ties to the state of Michigan. I think there are a lot of great things that are going to happen and I am looking forward to getting started and started and rolling up my sleeves and getting to work."

### **On playing a fun style...**

"I think our guys have fun playing the game. I think they play with emotion. I think they play with enthusiasm. I think when we take the field we have bodies that are fresh looking forward. Our philosophy has been that everything we do is geared towards letting it rip on Saturday afternoons. We don't wear them down during the week, we want them

fresh. We want them ready to go on Saturday with a lot of energy and we've always prided ourselves on that."

### **On the offense he likes to run...**

"Well, the spread offense right now probably has about 80 definitions, and we run a form of that. We take advantage of our athletes. We've been a team that has taken advantage of great team speed. We've always had great receivers and a quarterback that can get them the ball, but we've also had that tailback that can make plays as well. I think that, whatever the level of football that you have, you have to have playmakers, and you build things around your playmakers. We're not tied into any specific formations or sets or personnel packages. We're tied into getting the ball into the hands of people that can score touchdowns because you have to score more than you give up."

### **On recruiting...**

"That's a priority. I think that right now there are a lot of great young men out there that are wondering who is going to be the next coach at Saginaw Valley whether that's a place that they can see themselves. What we have to do as a coaching staff is evaluate where we are and evaluate the talent that has already been recruited and decide whether or not they are going to be great fits for our program. At this point there is a lot of catch-up from the stand point because I am not very familiar with the people that are being recruited yet, so I am going to have to watch a lot of film and rely on the expertise of our coaching staff to help me along the way in terms of where we are."

### **On his ties to the area...**

"I was a graduate assistant at Central Michigan under Herb Deromedi, back in 89, 90, and 91."

### **On his coaching staff...**

"That's a good question. I have a plan. I want to talk to the guys that are on staff here. Saginaw Valley has been very successful and you aren't successful without great players and great coaches. I think as a staff you have to evaluate our situation and see how it fits together. My philosophy is that you have to have a great staff, and your staff has to have the same chemistry that your team has. And that's what we have to decide over the next couple of weeks is how we are going to develop that staff and that comradery."

### **On Grand Valley...**

"From my experience from having Mount Union in our conference is that it's a great bench mark for where you have to be in your program. You know that if you're doing the things that it takes to get to that level, there aren't many teams that can beat you. But I think that you have to use Grand Valley as a bench mark. They have been one of the best teams over the last six or seven years in Division II and they are a short distance away

and you play them every year. You can evaluate your program on how well you play against the best team in the country. I think the bottom line is that you have to have a plan, and the plan is that you have to get better every day. The plan is to know what you're going for and what you're trying to be, but take it one step at a time because there are nine other teams on your schedule that are going to catch you by surprise if you are only worried about Grand Valley State.

“Our goal is to realize what we have to do to beat a Grand Valley, but at the same time to stay aware of the task at hand, and that's getting better every day for 365 days a year and each week making sure that we're ready to play.”

### **On replacing someone that has been here for a while...**

“I don't foresee any issues. There have been great coaches here at Saginaw Valley, and I'm the next in line. I think there are big shoes to fill. I've always felt this way: it's not about the coach that left, but its about the student athlete. You're only going to be successful if everyone is in this thing together. The point that I am going to make to every player in this program is that we're in this thing together. We are going to work together. When things are going well, it's because we did it together. If things aren't going well, I'll take the blame for it. This is a team concept and a team game, and obviously one person isn't going to make the difference, but it will be a lot of people working together to make the biggest difference.”

### **On being able to talk to his players at Capital...**

“It's a tough time when you're on break because of the holidays. What I did yesterday was I spent a lot of time on the phone. You can't call every single one of them. I called as many of the players that I felt I needed to. One of the toughest things in this business is that you are in it for the student athlete, and I developed some great relationships with the student athletes at Capital University. And no one can ever take those relationships away. Just because I'm not their coach anymore doesn't mean that I am a part of their life. So I think that biggest key is that as you go from one step to the next is to remember that this is about people and doing what it takes to develop that bond.”

### **On when he will meet with the SVSU players...**

“Some of the players are here today, and I think that's awesome that they came out. Today would be a great day to meet every single one of them, and that's what I plan to do. I am excited about that. I didn't know how many of them would show up today. When we get back to school, and classes start in January, I think that's when you have to have your first team meeting.

“It's a two-pronged approach right now. You have to do a great job in recruiting but I want to get to know this team. I want to get to know them, what they are about, and what their goals and aspirations are, and also share what my goals and my aspirations are.”

**On recent sanctions...**

“I don’t see it as a set-back. I think what you have to do is focus on what you have, not on what you don’t have. It’s only a set-back if you want it to be. We’re going to be that type of program where, if someone knocks you down, we’re going to get right back up and keep fighting. That’s the type of person that I am. I don’t see that as a set-back at all. Anything that went on previously that brought any type of negative stigmatism to this program is in the past and we’re ready to work on what we want to do in this football program.”