**Snow, Bruins In Hunt For A Title**

**11/18/2011**

*By Kevin McSpadden*
When B.J. Snow was in his mid-twenties, he decided he wanted to become a head soccer coach at a premier university. He saw an opportunity at UCLA, took a chance and worked hard to learn as much as possible. Along the way, Snow learned from the best. He began his coaching career as a volunteer assistant, working for the all-time great UCLA coach Jill Ellis.

During his learning process, Snow’s talent as a coach shined through. He went from being a high school coach in Portage, Mich., to one of the best head coaching prospects in the country. In 2006, he left Michigan and moved to Los Angeles, and in early 2011, he was named the head women’s soccer coach at UCLA.

Snow, originally from Hermosa, Calif., played his college soccer at Indiana. Snow moved to L.A. because his wife, U.S. women’s soccer player Lindsay Tarpley, needed to move to L.A for training. The move was a professional risk, considering that Snow gave up his job to make the journey.

“Before I moved out to California, I worked as a medical consultant. So I had a pretty good job, but the reason I left ‘the good job’ is because I was passionate about wanting to coach,” he said. “[The decision] never wavered and still hasn’t wavered.”

Snow uses the excellent training he received from his two mentors, Ellis and his college coach Jerry Yeagley, as a guide. Their advice and mentoring put him in a position to succeed when he entered the coaching profession.

“I think all of those things that happened from 2006 until now basically have been my learning experience so that when I had to deal with those issues on my own, I was able to look how Jill did it,” said Snow.

Snow placed a lot of value on the responsibility Ellis gave him early on in his career.

“I was in charge of the backs and defending for the first couple of years, then she put me fully in charge of recruiting,” Snow said. “Learning these helped for a seamless transition when I took over as head coach.”

Snow said the biggest adjustment he had at UCLA was when he discovered the corporate nature of high-level collegiate sports.

“Head coaching is focusing on the in-and-outs of how to run an organization. That was new to me,” he said. “Ask any college coach and they will tell you that the actual coaching part is a small portion of what you do.”

Snow said that budgeting, academics, recruiting and fundraising demand an incredible amount of time and energy. At a school like UCLA, where winning is expected, the expectations are that the program will maintain elite status regarding all coaching duties.

Snow said he understands the value of learning the complicated nature of coaching from Ellis. He knew that staying at UCLA to learn from her was the best career decision he made.

“I never wavered from my decision, because I felt like I was putting myself in the best position to learn,” he said. “I thought this was the best place to make it happen.”

Snow certainly has impressed during the start of his career, proving to UCLA that they made the right decision by hiring him. His first recruiting class was widely considered the No. 1-ranked class in the country. They proved the ranking correct with a successful season and earned a No. 2 seed in the NCAA tournament.

“(In recruits), the number one thing we look for is character,” he said. “Our program is built around bringing in people who want to be here and character is the number one thing.”

As the UCLA women’s soccer season winds down, Snow’s Bruins are in the hunt for an NCAA title. He never made a title run a goal of the season, but rather created a team that understood that at UCLA, being in the title race is part of the Bruin way.

“At UCLA the expectation is that we win national championships. You have to be ready to accept that standard. It's not something we have to talk about with our girls,” Snow said. “We want to compete for a national championship every year. That is why they want to come here.”

The second-seeded UCLA women's soccer team (16-1-3) continues tournament play at home this Friday, as the Bruins take on San Diego (12-7-1) in the NCAA Second Round at 7:30 p.m.