

Offensive Expert Mark Speckman Named Menlo College Football Head Coach

By: Dylan Vazzano

ATHETON, CA - Mark Speckman, an award-winning collegiate coach and pioneer of the "Fly" offense, was named as Menlo College football program's head coach today. Speckman, whose outstanding resume includes over 30 years of remarkable success at both the collegiate and high school level, will replace former head coach Fred Guidici, who has taken a spot on the football staff of his alma mater, NCAA Division I San Jose State University.

"The hiring of Coach Speckman shows the commitment we have to our student athletes in providing them the very best coaches available," said Athletic Director Keith Spataro. "We are privileged to hire such an amazing coach and I look forward to watching him build a championship program for the Oaks."

Speckman spent the past 17 years, the last 14 of them as head coach, at NCAA Division III Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. Under Speckman, the Bearcats were an impressive 82-59 (.582) in 14 seasons, including an outstanding 47-28 (.627) in Northwest Conference play. Additionally, Willamette enjoyed 5 conference championships, 5 national playoff berths, and a 1997 National Championship Game appearance with Speckman in the fold. The Bearcats have also seen 8 All-Americans, 4 Conference Player of the Year honors, and 79 1st Team All-Conference distinctions since he took over as head coach. Prior to Willamette, Speckman spent 14 years as a head coach in California high schools.

The overwhelming success has earned Speckman two Northwest Conference Coach of the Year awards (1999 & 2008), as well as being recognized as the 2008 Regional Coach of the Year by the American Football Coaches Association and D3Football.com. In 2008, Speckman was a Liberty Mutual National Coach of the Year Finalist, where he was featured on ABC and ESPN.

Speckman is regarded as an authority on the "Fly" offense, one that brings the flanker in motion across the formation before the snap to take a handoff, block on a running play, or become a receiver. The ball can go in a number of directions on any given snap, creating havoc for the opposing defense. His exciting, fast-paced offense has been used on a number of different football levels, including on the NCAA Division I stage and the NFL. In a recent article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jim Harbaugh, head coach of the San Francisco 49ers was reported as using Speckman's "Fly" offense, and attempted to incorporate it during his days at Stanford.

In addition to being a storied football coach, Speckman has an inspirational story that touches the hearts of everyone he meets. Despite being born without hands, he has defined perseverance his entire life. He used heart, courage, and determination in suiting up for two seasons at linebacker for Menlo from 1973-74, and even earned NAIA All-American Honorable Mention status at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, Calif, where he completed his degree after the '74 season. He has become a nationally recognized motivational speaker, spreading his inspirational tale on reaching one's potential to

numerous business, community, and educational organizations, including corporate giants Nike and Blue Cross.

"As a Bay Area native and Menlo alumnus, it's great to be able to come full circle. I am proud that I can give back and donate my skills as a coach to help turn around Menlo's football program," said Speckman, who inherits a football program that hasn't had a winning season in eight years. "I've had a pretty good track record in similar situations, and one of my strengths is looking at unique challenges to figure out how to achieve success. I am confident I can turn it around at Menlo."

With the hiring of Speckman, Menlo will say goodbye to one of its most liked and respected coaches, Fred Guidici. Guidici spent 14 years with the football program, including the last three seasons as head coach. With Guidici at the helm, the Oaks earned ten NAIA All-Independent selections and another seven All-Northwest Conference recognitions while Menlo was still a member of the NWC. Before becoming the program's head football coach, Guidici spent a great deal of his Menlo career as the team's Special Teams Coordinator, where he was instrumental in leading a number of record-setting special teams units.

"Fred is a true professional whose contributions to the college are immeasurable and remarkable," said Spataro. "He has given so much of his life to Menlo and will be missed by our students, alumni, administration, and faculty."