

## EZAVIER STAPLES | UCLA FOOTBALL Ø<ßÈ

Hello everybody My name is Xavier Staples I go to school at the UCLA University of California Los Angeles I play wide receiver and I'm number 18 Growing up I started playing up I started playing football at about seven years old Um A lot of the time my the coaches that I had growing up they always stuck around with me because I just grew up with them So from playing from seven all the way up to like what 14 is when we go to high school Um I had the same coaches I played under Coach Lou for the Long Beach 49er and actually Coach Louie has had this program for about over 20 years Um just trying to help kids make it out of Long Beach and I really appreciate him for that for sure Coach Junior Coach Junior was always the person He'll make sure I get to my workouts make sure that I'm doing school work He'll also put guys around me That's also toughening me up you know Um I got coach Lavelle Coach Lavelle was he was like the guy that made sure my skill was right He was always gonna have you doing your con drills doing your he was more so like he was the coach that you look at and you'd be like I'm ready to work when when he comes in my face you know So um I also had a coach named coach T who I recently did a podcast with He's also was the guy always taking me to class I mean always taking me to school and then getting me to workouts and everything So those guys probably they they've did a lot for me in my life Given sometimes my mom wasn't able to take me to those practices or take me to those schools and these were people that was making sure that I'm getting what I'm supposed to be doing doing So I think what gave me an advantage and just my daily life in general honestly would be just putting your full intent into everything you do you know So like with football you know when you get there when you're at practice making sure you're paying attention to everything the coach is saying making sure you're paying attention to everything that's being coached to you and taking that on and telling yourself that that this is what I'm gonna learn And as you keep doing that the process becomes easier and easier you become more fluent in what you're doing because you your intent is always there your mind is on what you're doing So um to put me at an advantage during my practices I like to focus I like I honestly I'm the type of person to focus on like what is being said but also what are people doing around me What are my teammates doing is my teammates doing something that I like I might just do what they're doing is my teammates doing something I don't like I'll use that as an example and um say that's probably

something that's not for me You know I started getting recruited as a sophomore out of high school Um I had just bought our our old team had just lost in the playoffs like round two And our head coach decided to take a new job and we instantly got a new head coach who first came in We instantly got a new head coach who first came in and uh he just asked all the guys like who's the guy on the team who's the guy on the team And everybody was just pointing at me and he in he came up to me and introduced himself and he was able to give me start getting me offers right Once spring ball came around like 707 was starting we was doing stuff like that He was bringing different colleges up to the school to talk to me Um It was great honestly but at the time I can honestly say like I was very shy and I was very how do I put it like I don't know I felt like I was a kid and I was like it was more so like a kid stays in a kid place growing up stays in a grown up place So it was hard being a kid talking to uh adults of course but I feel like I more so just let my film talk for me it was easier for my film to to tell these coaches what type of player I am then just me saying it to them So I guess at the beginning it was more so like what type of person are you like The coaches will ask me stuff like that What type of person are you How how do you how do you overcome certain things Like what how are you doing in school And you know you always just talk with a straight face uh smile occasionally shake hands during the recruiting process be more intent on getting to know the head coach or knowing the knowing the coach that is coming to your school and talking to you because I feel like in in football especially like coming out of high school I didn't realize stuff like this But like you have to you have to build a relationship with people that you come across uh for the fact that they might be able to help you they can help you do things that you wanna you wanna do you know So like you wanna go to you wanna go play D one football you're gonna have to get to know ad one football coach you know build that relationship with them Um Ask them about their selves Also provide provide these coaches with like what you can do for them So if you if you come up to a coach and you telling them that this is what I can help you do and this is my goals and this is my plan to help you I'm sure they'll look at you like I like this kid you know so I feel like just building a relationship build a relationship One thing that helped me on the field which I could say occurs in practice is like I said before your intent just understanding like what you're supposed to be doing and and actually wanting to learn it to apply it to yourself but just training your mind I feel like training your mind is the most important thing to do as an athlete It's all

it's all a process So understanding that it's a process like you're gonna have challenges at all points of your career Um But recently some challenges that I've had to overcome is my first year my first year being here for at UCLA I actually got hurt in a car accident and um unfort very unfortunate obviously adversity is adversity but like that hitting me like it was just this is my first year of playing football Um now um um I haven't had any experience I didn't I skipped out my senior year of high school I haven't had any experience playing college football I've only been able to do spring ball and that's it And uh obviously that took a toll on like me because me being hurt I can't do the thing that I love I can't do I can't provide the way I wanna provide for my family you know so breaking my leg actually put me into like a a state to where like I just wanted to be closed off from everybody didn't wanna be close Um Didn't want to leave the house I kinda I started doing uh kinda started doing bad in school also which also affected me in the long run Um So just from that from all that I took me coming back more personal So the challenge that challenge brought me the chance to bring to come back to football and be and take it more personal Take more like well this is something I'm given every day It could be taken to from me like this So put your best efforts into it put your mind to it put do everything the right way so that you don't have to go through challenges like that and it be and it takes such a big toll on you But I had a couple of friends though that that I felt like really got me through my my depression phase And I could say that these friends would come over uh as often as they could uh as often as they could and you know just be in my ear talk to me I tell them things like I don't wanna play football no more And then when is this supposed to get off When am I when am I gonna be able to walk again and stuff like that But there was always encouraging and always able to be like man you're just talking man you just talking you just feel like that because you're not capable right now That's all it is man And them saying that and keeping me up was also one thing that I knew I knew I had people on my side I know I had people rooting for me you know So my support system was very encouraging You go through things like adversity you go through things like hard workouts you go through things like school you go through things like family issues So I just feel like being able to stay mentally strong and just keeping your mind positive Everybody is gonna have something negative to say you know So why not just keep in your head the positive thoughts and block out all the negative if you have a dream if you have a dream I know it's a lot of people that there's a lot of doubters out there there's a lot of people

that will hate just to hate There's a lot of people that will be negative and bring that type of energy around you But if you just stay faithful to yourself and have a plan and stay positive I think I think you'll be perfect I think block all of that All that negativity out Don't let it don't let it settle in your head Fill your head with positive thoughts like talk to yourself talk to yourself seem crazy but talk to yourself and tell yourself everything I'm I'm gonna be able to do everything that I put my mind to I'm gonna be able I'm gonna do everything that I want I'm gonna I could go be an NFL player I could go be an NBA player I could go be a doctor I could go be a you know you could do all of those things It's just all about applying yourself you know