



Fresno State football coach Pat Hill tips his cap to the Diamond Dogs. To Hill's left in that Bulldog cheering section are WAC Commissioner Karl Benson and Fresno State president Dr. John Welty, accompanied by his wife, Sharon.

Eric Sorenson



Our Bulldogs' journey to the NCAA baseball national championship is a story for the ages! It's about an outstanding coaching staff that guided extraordinary student-athletes to great accomplishments on the field by working together as a team to overcome obstacles. Throughout the season, these Bulldogs faced must-win situations and came through every time, maturing as players and teammates. They were characterized as underdogs, but Coach Mike Batesole and his assistants had taught these student-athletes well, instilling the confidence and pride that distinguishes champions.

Our community showed its support, too, with the Red Wave traveling to Omaha and cheering throughout the Central Valley. Our university and, indeed, the entire community won't soon forget this special group. They represent the best in intercollegiate athletics and made a powerful statement about the danger in underestimating Fresno State or the New California region that we're powering into the future.

— *Dr. John Welty, University President, Fresno State*



The Bulldog baseball team winning the national championship took me back to the old saying, "Why not us?" Why should a supposedly "mid-major" school not have a chance to contend at the highest level? They didn't have an easy road, by any stretch of the imagination, but their playoff system gave them a way to do it, and they did it. That's inspiring to any coach, anywhere, and it just leaves the dream open for our football team. Why not us someday, too?

— *Pat Hill, Head Football Coach, Fresno State*



National championships don't come around very often and for the Bulldogs to have two in the last ten years (softball in 1998) is very impressive. But not half as impressive as their 2008 post season run—from Ruston to Long Beach to Tempe to Omaha—what an incredible performance.

While the championship game was thrilling—what great performances by Wilson and Detwiler—the game I thought was the most thrilling was the second game of the finals against Georgia. Facing elimination once again and after such a tough loss on Monday night, and to go down by five runs in the 1st three innings, and then to score fifteen in the next three innings, was absolutely amazing!

I was in Omaha in 2003 when Rice won the CWS. But to be there with the Bulldogs and to be on the field for the post game celebration was much more special. And it will go down as one of the two most memorable experiences in my fourteen years as WAC commissioner, Boise State's Fiesta Bowl win being the other. And to top it off, by being nominated for an ESPY brought even more attention to the great job by Coach Batesole and his Bulldogs. Only bad thing about that is that the Bulldogs were put in the wrong category—rather than being in the "biggest upset" category they belonged in a special category all by themselves: "greatest performance ever by a team over a thirty day period." Yes, what a thrilling performance by the "underdogs to wonderdogs." Go Dogs!

— *Karl Benson, WAC Commissioner*



The Bulldogs had a magical month. They turned that magical month into a magical season. Throughout the season Susdorf, Wetzel and Ahmady hit with amazing consistency and continued that consistency until the final out of the season. Their efforts set the stage for the strong finish. Their consistency held the team together through the rough times, which allowed the team to gain the confidence they showed in the playoff and in Omaha. The playoff and the World Series saw a total team effort.

In my opinion, Hedstrom's grand slam at Arizona State was the turning point. That home run seemed to lift the Bulldogs and completely deflate Arizona State. However, there were several other special moments and contributions. The outstanding relief pitching, headed by Burke, and the clutch pitching of the starters, led by Allison and Wilson, are examples. Of course, the outstanding offensive and defensive play of third baseman Tom Mendonca was a