

6/16/2011: One-on-One with Tim Dwight

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – If there's one word that might best describe Tim Dwight, it would be "passionate." As an athlete at Iowa, his passion was on display both on the gridiron and on the track. This week, it's all about giving back and holding his 10th annual football camp at South East Junior High. Outside of sports, his deepest passion now is promoting the use of renewable energy, a topic he could spend hours discussing.

On June 10, it was revealed that Dwight would be enshrined into the Iowa Athletics Hall of Fame this fall for his football and track accomplishments. The Iowa City native spoke with *HawkeyeDrive.com* Thursday afternoon about that, as well as both his camp and his Hawkeye career.

HawkeyeDrive.com (HD): You've been doing your annual camp for 10 years now. Did you think when you started it would keep going this long?

Tim Dwight: Well, I was hoping maybe it would match my career in the NFL. But we're hoping it goes longer. We're hoping that we'll keep this thing rolling. The coaches have been doing a great job, and my sister and all the volunteers have been phenomenal. It makes it pretty seamless for me. It's pretty amazing. We're still getting around 300 kids after 10 years, so I'm pretty excited about the draw that we get and it seems to me that we're doing things that are right. Parents like it.

HD: What's your reflection when you think back on the 10 years that you've done your camp?

Dwight: Well, one, some of the cash we've raised. We've done a great job of being able to donate, just the last two years, half the money we've donated over the last 10 years, so we've really streamlined things a lot. The coaching has gotten a heck of a lot better as an organization, what those guys know to expect from me, what I expect from them. The gear has gotten better. We've been here two years now at South East, but we will go back to City High.

We're getting a core of people – a core of coaches and volunteers – that all know each other and work together. That's what has really, I think, taken our camp off and really made it that much more enjoyable for our campers and their parents to come in here and see what we're about. They're like, 'Hey, we trust that our kid is going to be taken care of and they're going to learn some stuff.' Reflecting, it has just been pretty amazing. It has gone fast, though. I can't believe I'm sitting at 36, and 10 years into my camp. It's crazy how quick it goes.

HD: Last week, it was announced you're going into the Iowa Athletics Hall of Fame. At the ceremony, Bob Stein said he talked to you and that you were the most enthused out of anyone he could remember giving the call to.

Dwight: Well, I mean, seriously. I'm just a little kid from Iowa City. I went out there and I just tried to play my best. We played on some teams that were good football teams, but we never went to the Rose Bowl. We never played on January 1 or anything like that. There's Chuck Long, and you got [Ronnie] Harmon, you got [Andre] Tippett, you just got this plethora of players that have gone through the program that you've always looked up to, you always wanted to be around, and say, 'Wow. I wish I could be like that guy.'

When you get a call like that, and someone tells you something like that, it's very humbling because you just went out there and played. You played hard and did the best you could. Seeing

my name up there with all the other Hall of Famers, it's exciting. At the same time, it's like, 'Man. Whoa.' It's kind of heavy. It takes a lot of work, and a lot of other great players, and guys to be with you. All the film work, all the weights, all of that stuff. All the games you play. It also maybe says, 'You're getting old and they got to put you in there sometime, right?' But it was very humbling when he called me. I was very grateful that they nominated me for that. It was pretty cool.

HD: What does it mean knowing that you're not just being recognized for your football accomplishments, but also what you were able to do with track?

Dwight: Well, that's something I think has always helped me on the field, running track. I wanted to run track in college. I wanted to see how fast I could be in the state of Iowa. Having [Larry] Wiecezorek, [Pat] McGhee and those guys give me the opportunity was great, and also Hayden [Fry] giving me the opportunity of cutting out on spring practice and also weights during the winters, was very beneficial for me to be competitive in track. You can't just jump in and run with these guys in track. It takes a lot of work to do that, especially on those levels.

I just try to go out there. I love track and field. I loved it in high school and wanted to play it in college and do both, and they let me do that. It's neat that they recognize that, too, because we did some cool things when we were running back in '99. Then they did something really cool a couple of weeks ago when they won the Big Ten. It had been since '67. That was one of our goals running. We came close, but I'm just so happy for Joey [Woody] and Wiecezorek to get that one in mid-May. It was pretty sweet. I wasn't there. I wish I was there. But coming down to that last race like that? That's like in high-school and having a 2-minute drill in the state championship.

HD: Looking back on your time at Iowa, what are the memories

that still stick with you today?

Dwight: Games wise, my first game stepping on the field as a freshman against Central Michigan and scoring that touchdown. Playing against Penn State in Penn State, not the first time we played, the second time. We actually won. When we won. Playing in all the great stadiums that we did. Ohio State, Michigan, those places.

Also, the practices with the guys and Hayden being Hayden. How great he was with everybody and how he was such a player's coach, how he remembered everybody's name. Even when we were in some bowl trip down in Texas, Hayden has been to a lot of bowls over his career, especially when he came to Iowa. He remembered people back from the '80s that hadn't seen him in 15 years, and he'd know their names. Just being impressed with someone like that that's a player's coach. One of his speeches against Penn State here was pretty great. It was pretty graphic. It was fun.

And then the friendships that you have, that you build because you're all going through tough times. Not just in games, but training. You put so many hours in the weight room and on that field running that you start to build some great friendships. That's something you can't replace and something I don't think you can really simulate in other parts of life because you're going through some tough times, some happy times, and you basically live together for four years.

HD: Last year, there were some high expectations with Iowa football coming off the Orange Bowl win, and it didn't go the way fans anticipated winning eight games. Comparisons had been made by some to that of your team when you were a senior in 1997 that also had high expectations.

Dwight: Yeah, there were. We wanted to get up there and compete for a national championship, even though that Alamo Bowl we played Texas Tech, which wasn't very good. But that

was 14 years ago. But you know, that's why you compete. That's why you go out there and play the games. I know how Iowa fans are. When we get a good team together, we think we're going to win a national championship, and it's so hard to do that, no matter what school you are. Whether you're USC or Oklahoma, whatever. Even at Iowa, it's hard to do. That's maybe the first or second time I've heard that because I haven't really talked Iowa football much. But if that's what people are saying, that's what they're saying.

HD: So just to clarify, you don't see that parallel between the two teams?

Dwight: I don't look at football like that. I played the game and understand the game, so I don't look at it like that. I don't do comparisons of teams because they're completely different. No matter who's on there, it's just a completely different dynamic and the guys they're playing against are different. I don't compare like that.

HD: What does the future have in store for you here?

Dwight: I want to keep doing my camp. I want to start building this renewable energy business here, like solar business, and start bringing more jobs to Iowa, get us into more sustainability, and running my camp for hopefully another 10 years. Having guys like Sage Rosenfels come in and give support like that. Just try to be a model citizen, lead by example, and just try to enjoy my life a little bit more, travel a little bit more, see the world and just be a little more educated.