

Derby leaves football team

By Brendan Stiles

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Redshirt freshman linebacker and Iowa City native A.J. Derby was granted a release from his scholarship, the UI announced Monday.

Derby is the fourth non-senior to leave the football team this month. Offensive tackle Riley Reiff announced he'd forego his senior season for the NFL Draft and running backs Mika'il McCall and Marcus Coker were both released from scholarships. McCall and Coker both were suspended from Iowa's 31-14 loss to Oklahoma in the 2011 Insight Bowl.

"We are sorry to see A.J. leave the program," Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said in a statement. "He has been a positive member of our team and a pleasure to coach over the past two years. We wish him the best as he moves forward with his career."

The news of Derby's departure comes three months following an arrest on charges of criminal mischief and public intoxication, which led to Ferentz suspending him two games. After serving his suspension, Derby, who began the season as the back-up quarterback to junior James Vandenberg, switched over to linebacker and recorded a tackle on special teams against Indiana in what was his first game as a non-quarterback. Prior to both the suspension and position switch, Derby completed three of six pass attempts for 30 yards during games against Tennessee Tech and ULM.

"I would like to thank the University of Iowa and football coaches for the opportunity," Derby said in a statement. "Unfortunately, I don't feel this is the best fit for me personally to reach my goals as a student-athlete."

A.J.'s older brother, Zach Derby, plays tight end for the Hawkeyes and will be a senior in 2012.