

Davis leaves first impression at Iowa



Greg Davis (right) was formally introduced as Iowa's offensive coordinator during a press conference held on Monday, March 5, 2012, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – Seven days after being named Iowa's new offensive coordinator, Greg Davis finally got the opportunity on Monday to publicly discuss his new role after a year away from football. Davis, who was Texas' offensive coordinator for 13 years, took over for the departed Ken O'Keefe, who left to become the new wide receivers coach of the Miami Dolphins.

Coincidentally, the connection between Davis and head coach Kirk Ferentz was the man who snagged O'Keefe away from Iowa – Dolphins head coach Joe Philbin. Davis was being considered by Philbin as a possibility to join his staff in Miami, but that never materialized. When the vacancy at Iowa arose however, Davis reached out to Ferentz and conversations began to pick

up.

While Davis wasn't offered on the spot, it became clear Ferentz had enough interest in him that he wanted Davis to make a return trip to Iowa City following the coaches' annual Hawkeye Cruise held the week prior to Davis officially being named offensive coordinator.

Because Davis' hire was classified as an emergency hiring by the UI, Iowa athletics director Gary Barta said Davis is basically serving an interim role for now and would have to eventually re-apply for the position.

But the long-term future isn't of immediate concern to Davis, who made clear his only concern in the present was to help lay a foundation during the spring so he and the rest of the staff can identify who can step up and make plays for the offense.

"We want to remain physical," Davis said. "We want to continue to be able to run the football. At the same time, we're going to be in some ball games where we are going to have to throw the ball and we want to be proficient enough.

"Our definition of balance is being able to win the game either way."

Davis will also take over O'Keefe's other duty as quarterbacks coach, meaning he'll be working extensively with senior-to-be quarterback James Vandenberg. After being able to watch all the game film from Iowa's 2011 season, Davis came away impressed with his new signal-caller, not only for what he can do through the air, but with his ability to improvise and be able to run with the football when need be.

"James Vandenberg is an outstanding player. I think everybody agrees with that," Davis said. "I'm excited about being able to work with him."

One major point of emphasis made by both Davis and Ferentz on

Monday was that of flexibility. Davis reflected back on the number of times he had to adapt his play-calling at Texas in order to utilize talents of those such as former Longhorn quarterbacks Vince Young and Colt McCoy and former running back Ricky Williams, who won the Heisman Trophy during Davis' first season at Texas in 1998.

"He's an outstanding teacher," Ferentz said. "This came across from everybody I visited with and I think equally a big part of teaching is being flexible in your thinking.

"No matter where you're coaching, it's all about doing what's best for the players that you have on your roster."

The differences between Davis and his predecessor make up a short list. But one key difference is Davis will call plays and work from the press box as opposed to operating from the sidelines as O'Keefe did during his tenure at Iowa

"I've worked from the boundary before and you're just removed," Davis said. "It almost is like a video game in that you're not hearing all the collisions and all that and you can lay out all your charts and your information and that kind of stuff.

"That's the reason I like working from up there."

As far as actual play-calling is concerned, Davis said he wants to implement the best of both worlds – what worked for him at Texas, along with what has worked for Iowa in the 13 years Ferentz has been head coach. He mentioned no-huddle and tempo being discussed along with the zone blocking scheme the Hawkeyes have been known for.

"From the very first time Kirk and I started talking, it was about blending philosophy, about blending the way we call things and creating something that was 2012," Davis said. "That's what we are trying to do."

TRANSCRIPT: [Ferentz/Davis transcript \(March 5, 2012\)](#) (*Courtesy: UI Sports Info.*)