

Woods, Ferentz ready for new challenges



Iowa linebackers coach LeVar Woods discusses his new role with the Hawkeyes during a press conference held on Wednesday, March 7, 2012, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

By Brendan Stiles

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – As former players, LeVar Woods and Brian Ferentz both left their marks on the gridiron of Kinnick Stadium and both found opportunities in the NFL as undrafted free agents.

These two Hawkeyes are now getting the opportunity to bleed Black and Gold once again, but coaching the positions they once played.

Woods and Ferentz were both officially named as assistant coaches back on Feb. 18, with Woods getting to coach linebackers and Ferentz the offensive line. Woods gets his opportunity after having spent the last four seasons as an administrative assistant for Iowa, while Ferentz returns to

Iowa City after a coaching stint with the New England Patriots, whom he reached Super Bowl XLVI with just one month ago.

For Woods, the chance to coach at his alma mater while being able to raise his family in his home state was something the former linebacker couldn't pass up.

"I feel very fortunate, like the most fortunate man in the world," Woods said. "I get to coach a position I played at the university I attended for a coach I have the utmost respect for.

"It was great for me to be able to start all the opportunities right here in a place that I love."

For Ferentz, the chance to reunite with his father (and his brother, for that matter) was one he called "a no-brainer" after he got a chance to follow the advice of the previous head coach he worked for, Patriots head coach Bill Belichick, and use the time following New England's 21-17 loss to the New York Giants to "decompress."

"We took some time, but it just felt right," Ferentz said about returning to Iowa. "To me, it was a no-brainer, if that makes any sense, to come home and coach here and to be a part of this program that I feel very strongly about and that's pretty special.

"It has a special place in my heart. It was a pretty easy decision at the end of the day."



Iowa offensive line coach Brian Ferentz discusses his new role with the Hawkeyes during a press conference held on Wednesday, March 7, 2012, at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

Both were part of a major coaching transition that featured Iowa hiring new coordinators on both offense and defense. Ferentz likened it to dating for the first time following a divorce and said change could prove to be beneficial in the long run as the offensive coaches work from dusk until dark with newly-named offensive coordinator Greg Davis on shaping out what the 2012 Iowa offense will look like.

"It's a really healthy thing and I think it has been healthy for everybody," Ferentz said. "I think it will be really good for our players, too, to be exposed to some new things. We started that process and I think that's exciting."

In terms of recruiting, head coach Kirk Ferentz said his oldest son would handle recruiting in the state of Ohio, while Woods would be assigned to recruiting both Texas and the Kansas City area.

Having gotten a chance to fill in for Norm Parker on the coaching staff in 2010, as well as serve the role of interim defensive line coach shortly after Rick Kaczinski left to join the Nebraska staff, Woods was also able to experience recruiting trips and get a feel for what he'll now be asked to do even more of.

"All of my recruiting that I have done up to this point has been here on campus," Woods said. "It's a whole different ball game when you're sitting in the living room across from mom and dad and they are asking question that you're not quite

sure how to answer or know the answer to.”

Both assistants made clear there would be differences going forward. Woods mentioned how he stressed to his group of linebackers how he might ask them to read things differently or make a few tweaks to what had typically been done before.

As for Ferentz, he said his challenge between now and when the 2012 season does get underway is to earn the trust of the players he’ll be coaching.

“Basically, we are working under the premise that they have my trust completely until they prove otherwise and I need to go earn theirs through the spring and summer,” Ferentz said.

TRANSCRIPT: [Ferentz/Woods/Ferentz transcript \(March 7, 2012\)](#) (Courtesy: UI Sports Info.)