

# 2012 Spring Football position breakdowns: Quarterbacks (premium)

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In terms of player personnel, there isn't major change among the group of quarterbacks Iowa possesses this spring and entering the 2012 season. But even with guys returning, this position is one that will be closely monitored this spring now thanks to changes in coaching.

Gone is Ken O'Keefe, who not only was Iowa's offensive coordinator for 13 years under head coach Kirk Ferentz, but also handled duties as the team's quarterbacks coach. Filling both coaching positions now is Greg Davis, a man who spent 13 seasons at Texas working with the likes of players such as Major Applewhite, Vince Young and Colt McCoy.

With the changes in philosophy and scheme that are expected to be taking place right now, how the Hawkeye signal-callers handle the transition is going to dictate a ton both this season and beyond.

Returning is James Vandenberg, who will enter his senior season as the guy once again. In terms of leadership on the team and how he fared on the field last season, Vandenberg hasn't done anything that warrants him being benched. The Keokuk native threw for 3,022 yards and had 25 touchdown passes to just seven interceptions.

He should benefit from Davis being in charge now. But with that being said, no player is going to have more pressure on him to perform than Vandenberg, especially now with Marvin

McNutt no longer around to haul in catches and with the amount of shake-up taking place on the offensive line. Vandenberg will be expected to improve on the numbers he posted last season – not only in terms of statistical categories used to measure quarterbacks, but also in the number of games the Hawkeyes win in 2012.

Now where it gets interesting is with what's behind Vandenberg in terms of depth. John Wienke is also a fifth-year senior, but the odds of him seeing the field under center in 2012 are rare. Which leads to Jake Rudock, who redshirted last year and will have three years of remaining eligibility after Vandenberg moves on.

Rudock might be the biggest beneficiary to Davis' arrival in Iowa City. He's in a position where he can observe how Vandenberg fits into Davis' scheme. He also has an advantage down the road in the sense that Davis will have this entire year to learn Rudock's skill set and put him in a position where by the time he likely becomes Iowa's starting quarterback, any weaknesses in his game can be masked by the talent around him along the rest of the offense.

The Hawkeyes also have a junior college transfer on campus in Cody Sokol, who comes in after playing at Scottsdale Community College in Arizona. Sokol last season threw for 3,087 yards and 43 touchdowns to 10 interceptions. Ferentz has hinted at possibly having Sokol redshirt in 2012, with the opportunity to compete with Rudock and incoming freshman C.J. Beathard in 2013 with two years of eligibility still to his name.

As far as the spring goes, the one thing that needs to be made clear is Vandenberg is the guy. Barring injury, Vandenberg will get the first crack at drills with the first-team offense every chance he gets and will enter the fall as the starter. Ferentz and Davis have both given their endorsements to Vandenberg. If Rudock, Sokol or anyone else ends up emerging, it's because either Vandenberg got hurt or because it will be

more of a testament to their work ethic than anything else.

If Sokol does redshirt, then the development of Rudock while he's still the back-up is going to be worth keeping an eye on in 2012. Even if Sokol doesn't redshirt, there's no reason to think right now that Rudock won't still be the No. 2 signal-caller by the end of spring practice. Yes, both will be on an even playing field now that O'Keefe is gone, but at the same time, Ferentz and other members of the coaching staff have a year's worth of tape already on Rudock with what he showed in practice since arriving on campus last summer. Not to mention that with A.J. Derby no longer in the mix for Iowa, there's no reason at this time to think Sokol could move ahead of Rudock on the depth chart.

The question this spring isn't really who the quarterbacks are, but rather how they fit into what Iowa wants to do going forward as an offense.