

# 3/28/2012: Iowa spring football notebook



Iowa running backs coach Lester Erb discusses his group of running backs for spring football during a press conference with the local media held Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at the Hayden Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

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IOWA CITY, Iowa – Lester Erb was one of two assistants on Iowa's 2011 staff not to leave or change roles this offseason.

Sitting at a podium in front of a throng of reporters Wednesday, Erb admitted the transition for him hasn't been easy even though he remains at running backs coach, a position he took over in 2008 to make way for wide receivers coach Erik Campbell. Coincidentally, Campbell is the other assistant still around from last season not to change roles.

"I'm probably the one having the most trouble with the transition," Erb said. "I was in the same terminology, the

same system for really about 15 straight years.

“The concepts haven’t changed a whole lot. But our players have really taken to it and a couple of the players might even be a little bit ahead of me, just to be honest.”

While change has taken place everywhere around him, nothing has changed for Erb, at least from a personal standpoint. From a personnel standpoint, however, the story is quite different.

The Hawkeyes return a bevy of running backs for 2012, but the group of backs lacks experience. The three names listed on Iowa’s depth chart this spring are all sophomores, with two having been redshirt freshmen last season. Sophomore back Jordan Canzeri is the expected leader of this group after rushing for a team-high 58 yards on 22 carries in the Hawkeyes’ 31-14 loss to Oklahoma in the 2011 Insight Bowl.

“I think it just comes down to consistency,” Erb said regarding Canzeri. “He demonstrated a little bit of durability there for not being the biggest back out there. But he has got to improve on some things, pass protection and some of those other areas. That’s what we are looking for.”



Iowa defensive backs coach Darrell Wilson discusses his group of defensive backs for spring football during a press conference with the local media held Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at the Hayden

Fry Football Complex in Iowa City.

### **New, but familiar feeling for Wilson**

While Darrell Wilson finds himself in a new position this spring, it's one he's at least familiar with.

After coaching the linebacking corps since joining head coach Kirk Ferentz's staff in 2003, Wilson is now in charge of the defensive backs, a position he filled following the promotion of former defensive backs coach Phil Parker to defensive coordinator. As a player, Wilson played defensive back at Connecticut back when it was still a Division-II program. He also coached defensive backs during a three-year stint as an assistant at Rhode Island.

"Things are going well and Phil is doing a great job of putting it all together," Wilson said. "We are really blending very well back there.

"In this business, nothing really surprises you. There's an ultimate plan and right now, that's what it is."

One emotion that could easily be sensed with Wilson as he spoke Wednesday was excitement. Whether it was talking about the leadership of players such as senior cornerback Micah Hyde and junior free safety Tanner Miller, or talking about the potential of players such as junior cornerback B.J. Lowery and sophomore strong safety Nico Law, the joy on Wilson's face couldn't appear more obvious.

When talking about both Lowery and Law, Wilson gave them glowing praise. He described Lowery as having great feet and hips to play the cornerback position. As for Law, the praise was such that would remind Hawkeye fans of a Bob Sanders, Matt Roth or Pat Angerer.

"He's extremely physical," Wilson said about Law, who

currently sits atop the 2-deep at strong safety this spring after he was mainly used on special teams as a true freshman in 2011. "Out of control a little bit, but he's physical."

### **Coaching staff finalized**

Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz made one final announcement regarding his 2012 coaching staff Wednesday, and once again, there is a coaching position shuffle taking place.

Eric Johnson, who had been coaching the tight ends group, will now help assist Reese Morgan with coaching the defensive line while continuing what has become a more prominent role within the football program as Iowa's recruiting coordinator. Taking Johnson's place with coaching the tight ends is graduate assistant David Raih.

Ferentz cited the ever-changing world of recruiting in college football as playing a big factor in making this decision.

"I just think the demands of that segment of our organization are so, so strong," Ferentz said. "My goal was to get Eric in a position where he could dedicate more time to that area. He's doing a lot of work for us in regards to our personnel."

**TRANSCRIPT:** [Ferentz/Erb/Wilson transcript \(March 28, 2012\)](#) (Courtesy: UI Sports Info.)