

April 4, 2012



An interview with:

**COACH KIRK FERENTZ
COACH ERIK MORGAN
COACH REESE MORGAN**

COACH FERENTZ: Welcome to everybody. Give you a quick update. We finished our fifth practice on Saturday. That puts us a third of the way through. So far, we're really pleased with the attitude of the players. They've been very attentive, I think they're learning well. Certainly got a lot to work on, especially on the offensive side of the football. I think their attitude has been good, they've really learned well.

We're making progress. We got a long road in front of us obviously. The good news is we're not playing anybody this spring so it was something we've expected. Been pleased with the progress there.

Really the only negative at this point is obviously Jordan Canzeri, he was MRI'ed after his injury. It was a non-contact injury. Got an MRI late in the week. It confirmed an ACL situation. So that's going to be repaired this afternoon. Certainly we're hopeful that goes real well. We'll take it day-to-day as he starts his rehab work and all that type of thing.

His family will be here with him today. We'll get through that and then start working on the road back from that point.

Then the last thing, Erik Campbell and Reese Morgan will visit with you today. We finished up I believe with Lester last week. Those three groups are probably the groups that have the most work to do right now in terms of our lack of experience, what have you. I think all three groups have done a really good job so far. The backs had a better day Saturday. Certainly Erik has been

working hard with the receivers. He's a veteran receiver coach. Those guys are making progress.

Reese obviously has flipped over to the defensive line. Excellent teacher. Has those guys moving around pretty good this spring, too.

Again, representative of our team, we got a lot of work to do, but we'll get there. A matter of time, a lot of hard work.

With that I'll throw it out to any questions.

Q. Timetable on Jordan?

COACH FERENTZ: We'll play it by ear. Typically it's five to six months for a guy to get cleared medically. It's a matter of what they can do physically, they're out of harm's way from a medical standpoint, then they have to try to regain, get back to old form.

But he was doing well. That probably puts us around the start of September I would anticipate when he gets cleared, somewhere in that ballpark, give or take a couple weeks. Just a matter of how quickly he can get back.

We won't go in with a set plan, just see how he goes. Most important is his welfare.

Q. Does everybody just move up?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, it's pretty simple. We don't have a lot of options right now. It's a pretty clean group out there. You have Damon Bullock out there, then De'Andre Johnson, certainly the new guy out there, too. De'Andre has been working there, picking things up. Did a double take, whatever day that was, when Jordan got hurt, I guess it was Thursday. Those guys are doing good. I thought they improved on Saturday.

Q. How do you balance that need for some contact in camp?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, it's hard to practice football sitting in a chair. If we could, it would be a lot easier. The meetings are valuable, but you have to go out and work. We've always

tried to be very, very careful about how much live contact we have, how much live tackling we do. We'll continue to be cautious there. At some point guys have to be tackled, too. Conversely defensive players have to tackle.

We've got a plan that's mapped out for the spring, X amount of situations that we'll put them in. We'll kind of stick to that plan and go from there.

Q. How did the injury happen?

COACH FERENTZ: Making a plant, a cut. He was injured. Maybe it's ironic. It's interesting. Most of these injuries tend to be non-contact. You look at Dominic Alvis, a defensive end, pretty rugged position, he gets hurt on a punt return running down the field.

Just one of those things, not much you can do about it. It's part of football, unfortunately.

Q. Do you ever shake your head sometimes, one position, so much attrition?

COACH FERENTZ: I shook my head when Sam Aiello got hurt back in October of 2000. I did shake my head going home like, What's going on here?

It's football. We had a run of bad luck back then. It was 2000, I guess, bad fortune. I don't know about bad luck, but bad fortune at that position. Ended up being the strength of our team two years later. Those things come and go, there's ebb and flow.

If nobody ever got hurt, football would be the greatest game in the world. That's really the biggest downside to football.

Q. How is installation going? Is that what you're calling it?

COACH FERENTZ: It is every spring. This has got a new twist to it, more so again offensively. We're doing some things a little differently on defense, but it's not a major difference, whereas offense, it's a whole new deal, starting with the terminology, just the way we name things, call things.

So, yeah, there's been a lot of learning going on. I think the players knew that going in. I think that coupled with the fact that we're a pretty inexperienced, young football team has raised or heightened their awareness or eagerness to learn. I think overall the concentration has been really good. Not that I really knew what to expect totally, but I think the guys, it's been a pretty seamless transition for them.

Q. How has that installation changed at all regarding Jordan's injury?

COACH FERENTZ: We're going straight ahead. We're just a little thinner than we were last week.

Q. I think the true freshmen were going to play. Now they're definitely going to play. Is that accurate?

COACH FERENTZ: Basically going back two weeks ago, we really didn't have anybody proven, experienced at that position. We'll give everybody an opportunity now that we're one man down, more so than two weeks ago. It just opens up opportunities for other players.

If there's good news in it we've had a lot of success playing young players at that position. Lester has done a good job with that. We'll allow those guys to really show what they can do, so...

We'll come out of spring ball with an idea of where we're at, a better gauge on where we're at than certainly we had back at the end of December. Not that that won't change, too. But basically any first-year guy that proves that he can help our team, we'll give him that opportunity.

Q. ACL time table, it started out as a year. You're talking five or six months?

COACH FERENTZ: Way back when, too, with my recollection in the '80s, it wasn't a sure thing. Nothing is sure in medicine when it comes to the body. It just seemed like a lot of guys didn't come back the way they left. The one thing that's changed I think with just the advances made in medical procedure, typically guys come back stronger now. I keep thinking about a guy like Chad Greenway, when he got injured, unfortunately had the same injury his first year in the NFL, as well. But most of those guys will tell you they come back stronger. The repaired knee is usually stronger than the non-repaired one. There's a phase that they get cleared medically, then it takes some time after that to really look like they did before they got injured.

But the good news is most guys have come back in great, great shape.

Q. How has the coaching shuffle worked out?

COACH FERENTZ: So far it's been great. I expect it to get better. Ron Aiken was a veteran

line coach. When he left, we transitioned Rick Kaczinski from a grad assistant position on the offensive side of the ball. He was working with Reese with the offensive line. Our thinking was he was a good coach. We felt like he was a good coach. He didn't have the résumé Ron had or Reese had, but he was a good coach. I think he proved to be a good coach.

I think the big difference here is if you look at the depth and the broadness of Reese's résumé, starting with what he did as a high school coach, you talk about teaching in its purest form, if you're not a good teacher, you're not going to be a good high school coach. Reese demonstrated that. He's done that with every opportunity he's had professionally.

I look at him as being much more prepared than Rick was for this challenge. He's done a great job. He's already gotten some top people in the field. I know he'll continue to do that. That's what all coaches do typically as they move along.

Q. Has Brian Ferentz helped out with the tight ends?

COACH FERENTZ: A little bit. He's got things to say, ideas to share, what have you. Dave Raih is really doing a nice job. We expected that, too. Dan Clark did the same thing a couple years ago. Dan had been with us a couple years, another outstanding coach in my mind. Brian is helping out, Greg is helping out. But Dave is doing a really nice job with those guys.

Q. When do you know if all freshmen have qualified? Is that more in May?

COACH FERENTZ: Sometimes we know in September (laughter). Things drag. Bureaucracy, procedures to work through.

As far as we know right now, everything is in good shape. Hopefully no excitement there.

Q. You don't really have much of a choice at running back, but to have freshmen play, if you had your option, would you sort of redshirt people immediately?

COACH FERENTZ: I think the nature of sports right now, some freshmen running around last Monday night that looked pretty good. They don't look like freshmen. Things have changed. Things have changed in college sports, not just football, but college sports in general.

I think one thing we're seeing, it's probably true in all sports, kids are a little bit more worldly now than they used to be. They come in a little bit

better prepared in some instances. I think still in football, if you stay on the perimeter, it's a little bit easier to make that transition. Guys that are away from the football, a little tougher typical with linemen, Bulaga was the exception there. Just depends on the individual.

Running back, it's realistic to think a guy can come in here and do a good job. Both young men we recruited, Greg Garmon and Barkley Hill, are guys that demonstrated in high school throughout their careers they have that potential.

We'll give them every opportunity to learn and show that they can play and we'll keep our fingers crossed. I think in our case right now it's realistic that both those guys plus the guys we have on our roster will play next year.

Q. Is Barkley scheduled to play in the All-Star (Shrine) Game?

COACH FERENTZ: I think he is.

Q. Would you discourage that?

COACH FERENTZ: No. We've had a lot of guys play in that game. I think it's a great experience. Two sons play in it. I think it's just a fantastic opportunity. As a parent, it's a wonderful thing. I'm going back to the time in the '80s, every young guy we've ever had in our program that played in that had a great experience. A lot of those guys have gone on and had great careers, too. There's so many good things good about it even outside of the football aspect of it even.

Q. Any foreseeable position changes?

COACH FERENTZ: I don't see it right now with the current roster. I think we're pretty content with where we're at.

I'll turn it over to Erik and catch up with you a week from Saturday. Thank you.

COACH CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. I guess I want to start off talking about the spring practice so far. I think the group is coming along well. A young group, inexperienced, but they're very competitive. They're competing every day in practice right now.

The biggest thing right now on the offense is trying to learn a new system. I think the guys are all doing a great job of learning it. Hopefully by the end of spring we start reacting versus just learning and running the routes, running plays, what they kind of think in the huddle, thing like that,

whereas hopefully by the end of spring, again, we're reacting, just start playing football, look better as we go.

The team as a group is doing a great job of really picking up the system. I'm proud of those guys about picking it up, embracing it, really going about the business of trying to learn it all at one time. At the same time they're competing, that's the biggest thing right now, competing for a job.

We don't have a starting lineup right now, but by September we will have a starting lineup. They're trying to learn a spot in every aspect. In Greg's eyes as the new coordinator, look good in front of him. Make sure they're doing their job in every aspect, so...

Questions.

Q. Any surprises so far?

COACH CAMPBELL: The guys really start to emerge right now, Kevonte Martin-Manley, who last year got his feet wet as a redshirt freshman, playing the first time. Now you can see that experience pay off. You can see him looking like a veteran receiver, doing things that a guy with that kind of experience has shown. So he's done a good job so far this spring.

Q. Anything besides what things are called that the receivers are relearning under the new offensive coordinator?

COACH CAMPBELL: Like I said, the whole offensive system is new, not just the terminology, but so-called we tweaked things. We run the same routes, but different way of running it. Quarterback and running backs are on the same page. Things we've done last year, years in the past, we tweaked some things. Those guys have picked that up, made that adjustment. Also how we read in defensive fronts, secondaries, those type of things. Things are a little different. Little tweaks all the way through.

Q. Coach Davis likes to throw the football. That's his reputation. Have you seen that? Is that music to your ears?

COACH CAMPBELL: Of course. All receivers want the ball. Guys know they have to do their job in the running game, too, in order to get the ball. Coach Davis is a guy who is known to like to throw the ball, at the same time he's also lined up and run the ball a lot, too.

We just do our job. Whenever it's called for us to do it, be ready. Those guys have really embraced that part of it.

Q. Kevonte looks like a slot receiver. How is he adjusting to that side?

COACH CAMPBELL: In our system he plays both, slot and outside, just depending on what play is called, what personnel we have on the field. He's doing a great job playing both. Like I say, he's in our three-wide set, in the slot so far, has picked it up well.

Q. Who is the number three receiver right now?

COACH CAMPBELL: I have no depth chart right now. They're all competing right now for that spot. Like I say, hopefully we have more than just three receivers come next fall.

Right now all the guys are competing for it.

Q. How do you feel about the depth of the position?

COACH CAMPBELL: Well, I feel it's still young. A lot of guys don't have a lot of game. When I say young, I mean game experience. Right now if you look at our roster, besides Kevonte and Keenan, next guy in mind is Steve Staggs, he played a little bit in games, but a few snaps. Don Shumpert played some, but only a few snaps. Jordan Cotton had a few snaps.

Not a lot of guys with game experience. That's why I said it's open for grabs right now.

Q. Has Keenan taken that next step, taking over the Marvin role?

COACH CAMPBELL: He's a veteran guy. We expect more out of him than we have in the past because now he is the most experienced guy. He's coming and practicing. At the same time, again, learning the new system, it slows you down a little bit.

We're all right now at the beginning stages. Like I said, by the end of spring, going into training camp, I think guys will be full speed ahead and really start seeing the finished product.

Q. Has Staggs changed his approach this season?

COACH CAMPBELL: Well, no. He's a football player. He's one of the guys in the group. Doesn't make a difference if you're a scholarship player or just received a scholarship. Doesn't make a difference. The guy has been competing. He's done a great job. A smart kid who has been

learning all the different positions on offense. Like I say, that's why he got an opportunity to play last year, he knew a lot of things, he was always prepared for every game.

He got thrown into some heated situations. Key third downs last season he got thrown in and made the play. I'm looking forward to him to keep improving.

Q. How does Jacob Hillyer look?

COACH CAMPBELL: Jacob is coming along. New system. Last year he learned something, now he's starting off as a freshman all over again. I think he's growing and developing. Like I said, I'm waiting to see at the end of spring how they come along learning the system. He's still learning as a receiver. He is a freshman. It's his first spring. He don't know what it's all about, the competition level, competing every day. He's not on the scout team anymore. He's on the team where he's being looked at in those situations.

Q. I know the receiver is a more technical position than people get credit for. Do you think any of the freshmen can come in and maybe work their way into some playing time?

COACH CAMPBELL: I hope so. We recruited three kids that have an opportunity to come in and compete for the position. We going to find out once they come in here who is going to emerge that can play and we can depend on. A lot of guys can run and catch the football, but there's the technical part of it, reading defenses. In this level, defensive coaches are pretty smart. Read the defense, react, also have the physical strength to compete at this level and all that. So we'll wait and see.

I'm prepared for a freshman to come in and help us.

Q. Last year there were a lot of dropped passes. What did you see on film that maybe caused some of that and have you applied that to any drills in the spring to help with hand-eye coordination?

COACH CAMPBELL: That's part of the season. Everybody drops balls. Marvin was the all-time leading receiver and he dropped balls.

You coach against that. You keep drilling over and over, get those guys really focused with concentration. That's the biggest thing with dropped balls, most of them are lack of concentration or you lose focus when you needed

it most. Like I said, any ball that's dropped, there's a reason why it's dropped. Anytime the quarterback throws the ball, you expect to catch it. I don't care where it is, if it's in the stands, you're supposed to go get it. There's always a reason behind it. We always focus on that and improve.

Q. How much would it help your job if Marvin McNutt is playing on Sundays this fall?

COACH CAMPBELL: My job? It's a great thing for the university, to see him play on Sundays. He's gone now. We got a new group. The next man in line, you know. That's our motto here, the next one that can come up and produce.

But, yeah, it's always great because those guys can say they played with a guy on his level.

Q. Did that help you with recruiting?

COACH CAMPBELL: Of course. I mean, of course. He's a guy, like I said, set a lot of records here. He's known nationally now. Hopefully he has a great day on draft day for him. Like I say, every little bit helps in recruiting.

Q. Have you talked to NFL coaches?

COACH CAMPBELL: Yes, I have. I've talked to them.

Q. What have you told them about what he brings?

COACH CAMPBELL: The generic questions: What kind of kid is he? Can he catch? I just talk about he's a guy who is still young, still developing. He's only been a receiver for three years versus some kids who have been there for five years in college, those things.

He still has an upside. I think he hasn't peaked yet as a receiver.

Q. Will there be competition between Kevonte and Keenan for Marvin-type touches?

COACH CAMPBELL: I think there's always competition. Also there's competition to stay on the field because there's young guys behind them that are going to push them and try to take that spot. You never can relax here because there's always competition, even with having great tight ends. Everybody is competing to get the ball. The better you play, the more opportunities you going to have it versus giving it to another position or another player.

Q. Do you see a time when you need a guy to catch 85 balls next year?

COACH CAMPBELL: I'd love to have that. It's about victories, whatever it takes for us to win. If it's 20 catches the whole season, if it helps us win, we'll do that. That's the bottom line. We don't worry about the goals out there. Individually they have goals. The bottom line is to win on Saturday. That's what we want to do. Whatever it takes to win: blocking, running routes, being the clear-out guy. Whatever it takes, we all work together to help the team.

Q. Do you have different standards for different receivers in the system?

COACH CAMPBELL: The standards are still set. The standard is always set high. You are going to expect Keenan to be more knowledgeable of the game than a young freshman coming in. The expectations for an older guy who has played a lot, you know, are higher than a young kid. Fewer mistakes to be made the older you get.

Right now, like I say, the first week of spring ball, I expect those guys to make mistakes because it's a totally new system. After that, they know the system, those guys can make a difference between a freshman and a senior.

Q. When you're looking at a receiver, do you pay much attention to the recruiting rankings?

COACH CAMPBELL: The biggest thing you want to see is can a guy fit in your system here, can he play for Iowa, is he academically qualified, those type of things.

The rankings, that's somebody else's eyes. We look at it as the receiver coach and also our offensive coaches, we all look at him and say, Can he fit our style of play? Every kid don't fit our style of play. Every kid don't fit in. Not a big factor. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We'll bring in Reese Morgan.

COACH MORGAN: Spring ball is a third of the way through. We've have five practices, three padded, two unpadded. We have a young, inexperienced group. They're eager to learn. They're great young men. They've bought into what we're trying to do. Really it's been fun.

For me on a personal note, I am absolutely loving it, enjoying it. What a great opportunity Coach Ferentz has provided. You miss the guys you've worked with obviously, but they're still out

there. You can still have the relationships. But this is just a great group of young guys to work with.

In addition to that, you're on the other side of the ball, working with a new staff. It's been fun being in the room with Phil Parker, Darrell Wilson, LeVar Woods, and Eric Johnson is helping us as well.

We're off to a good start. We're not ready to play a game. We're young. I'm sure we'll have a few questions that will address that.

Q. What was your initial reaction when you were asked to make that switch and how has that transition been for you?

COACH MORGAN: I'll tell you, coach has a plan for everything. As you well know, he's a tremendous coach. When he presented this opportunity and challenge, I was excited about it. I was a little bit shocked at first thinking, Oh, wow.

But it really has been, the transition, has been great. I'm trying to learn from everybody. We've got some former NFL players that are here training and so forth. I've had the opportunity to make a couple visits and talk to people.

It's just like anything else, in your profession, you're trying to be the best you can be, you're trying to learn from other people, so forth. Certainly I'm in that situation now as well.

Q. In what way has Eric Johnson been helping you out?

COACH MORGAN: Eric's job is with the recruiting. Eric knows the defense. He's been on the defense. He was a player in the defense. He was a student assistant, a GA in the defense at Vanderbilt with Norm. He was kind of available there. We were able to kind of steal him away from recruiting for a few practices. It's been really a benefit.

Q. Everyone in your position group, the young guys, apparently all of them are getting more of a chance than they have in the past. Are there a couple guys that emerged?

COACH MORGAN: I'll tell you what, it's really hard to tell right now. I can tell you this: no one, even the guys that have played, which are very few, has a spot set, regardless of their year or age in school. We're going to play the best four guys.

I could see us realistically playing six, seven, eight guys. I think we're probably going to

have to do that to a certain extent.

I think the progress has been good. I think some guys have stepped up and risen and taken advantage of their opportunities.

I would mention -- without mentioning all the guys, I can go through and talk about them, but I think a guy that to me has really bought into it, is really trying hard, been on the scout team a lot is Louis Trinca-Pasat. Steve Bigach, leader of the group, Steve has been on the field and played. He's respected by the players because of his knowledge and because he's such a hard worker. He cares about the other guys. He's trying to help 'em out a little bit.

From a young standpoint, Darian Cooper I think is going to be an excellent player. He has some natural tools. But he's very, very raw, very young, learning the system, just like his attitude.

Riley McMinn is another guy, I think he's got a big upside. Riley is very raw. Not there physically. He's a 240-some-pound freshman going against a guy that's a little older and bigger than him.

Mike Hardy is a guy, we've been pleased with his progress. Bud Spears, Melvin Spears, has gotten better each and every day. He's a guy you feel pretty good about.

We've got a group of guys that nobody knows about or anything else. But I'm excited to work with them.

Q. Do you see any true freshmen contributing?

COACH MORGAN: It's tough at that position. I think either line position, it's hard to do because of the physical nature. Certainly those two young men would have physical ability to do that possibly. It remains to be seen, it really does. We'll have to see how things go in August. If they happen to be here training in August, how they progress.

It's the physical part, the mental part, then the toughness part. Football is a tough game. Thank goodness not always the most talented guys are the guys that play. It's the guys that are the most productive.

Example, Tom Nardo last year. Who is going to be the next guy? Who is going to be the next Tom Nardo, Karl Klug? That's the challenge we have for these guys.

Q. What would your expectations for Carl Davis be when he comes back?

COACH MORGAN: Just like they are for everybody else. The beauty that Carl has done, Dominic as well, during their time away, their role has changed, okay? Their role has changed. They now have become mentors for players. They're now coaching the guys. When the ones are in, they're coaching the twos. They're back there interacting with them. Both guys have been on the field, although Carl has been limited. Dom has been out there, had a chance to feel it. He was out there a year ago, but now is he thinking am I good enough to play, I've had some injuries.

Carl's role has been really good. The expectations for him will be extremely high because he's played. But he is a young guy. But I'm impressed with his knowledge of the defense and the fundamentals.

Q. How much do you enjoy the challenge of trying to rebuild this defense right now?

COACH MORGAN: I better like it (laughter). It's fun. When you have a group of guys, a lot of people are just, you know, they're kind of the hotspot right now, you know. If we can somehow help them believe in themselves a little bit more, if they can trust what we're trying to do, and if we get them to play as hard as they can and give great effort, then teach a little fundamentals, teach some technique, teach some things along the way. Our thing is about daily improvement. If they can get a little bit better each and every day.

Our opponent right now is ourselves. Our challenge is how much can we improve. Can we watch yesterday's tape and can we show improvement from yesterday to today. Are they getting their hands inside more, pad level better, footwork better. If our guys buy into that, we have a chance.

Q. Has it been difficult to put your ego aside in some way, now have to ask people how to coach the position or former players?

COACH MORGAN: Not at all. I tell you what, first of all, I'm just fortunate as heck. I don't call this work. How many people can show up, get paid well, do what they love to do, they'd do it for nothing. Just like many of you are passionate about your job. This is what we like to do. It's so much fun.

Ego-wise, I remember getting turned down for high school jobs, interviewing for them. I

remember coaching junior high boys basketball, not knowing anything about it, having a guy come in who ended up winning a couple of state titles in girl's basketball, Jim Scheffler (phonetic). He said, you organize the practice, deal with the parents, take care of the discipline, I'll help with the other stuff.

I think what it is, Coach Ferentz is such a great man, I think he's created a culture here where everybody wants to do things, wants to help out. I feel very fortunate to be a part of it, quite honestly.

Q. The perception from the outside is that the D-line is the most inexperienced 'weaker' part because there aren't any named players. Do guys have a chip on their shoulders?

COACH MORGAN: I haven't heard that much. I kind of caught the gist.

I think sometimes, and I don't know how much our guys pay attention to really what's going on out there in the media, but I think it's obvious they have to, but they do on their own. Hopefully they'll want to have a little bit of that chip on their shoulder, that mentality that, hey, we can play, too.

We're not pigeonholed. We can't go out and recruit anybody right now. We've got the guys we have. We have 10 guys right now in spring ball that can participate. Our job is to do the best we can at getting those guys to improve, develop them, have them understand conceptually what's going on, understand the fundamentals of football, leverage, pad level, effort, toughness, all that stuff.

Q. You have been a two-gap. Is that going to continue or does that change?

COACH MORGAN: You might want to talk to Phil about that. I think there will be a lot of similarities. I think there's going to be some things that Phil is going to try to do to help in certain areas. He'll have some changes and tweaks.

It's still going to be fundamentally very similar. There are going to be times where guys are going to have to have a two-gap mark and bow up in there. When they do that, there's certain techniques we have to do a good job of teaching to allow a guy to have success with that. When you have a hundred some young freshmen, it's two-gap. When you get double-teamed, it's 600 pounds.

Q. That can be defeating for a young player, to get his hat handed to him. Are you careful who you ask to do that?

COACH MORGAN: No, that's going to be part of it. We're going to do what we're going to do. We're going to have a certain level and style of play. Our guys have been great about it, they really have. It has been energizing, rejuvenating, fun. I'm not sleeping a lot at night. I keep thinking about fundamentals, technique. Other than my wife not getting a lot of sleep, it's pretty good.

Q. Looks like you recruited Casey McMillan. That's a big learning curve.

COACH MORGAN: Casey was recruited, his other opportunities at other schools were on the defensive side. He wanted to come over. The numbers are down. Casey is a good guy. He's going to be a senior. Hopefully he can have a role in some way, shape or form. But he, like every other guy, is going to have an opportunity. They have to improve themselves this spring.

Q. How will Riley McMinn contribute?

COACH MORGAN: He has to eat more, and he needs to gain some weight and some strength, pretty obvious. I think what he is, he's an explosive guy. What you like about him, he's very coachable. He is one of those guys that you show him on tape and the next day you see improvement immediately. He will do it the next rep. He's got a great kinesthetic sense about himself.

He is a guy physically you'd like to have Chris Doyle spend some more time with him. He's going to have to be ready to go, ready to play, as are all the guys.

Q. Kirk has joked about your recruiting trail hopping in your car. What is that like for you, driving around the state of Iowa?

COACH MORGAN: It's not just Iowa. I was closer to Denver than I was Iowa City a couple times. We were recruiting some guys out in that area. Coach, I can save the university a ton of money if I keep going, there's a Motel 6 in Sterling.

You enjoy it. It's really about relationships and people. The relationships you develop with the high school coaches, the players, the parents during the recruiting process, when they're on campus, you're learning.

I don't listen to the radio. I'm kind of

thinking about stuff, on the phone. I don't like to listen to the radio. I kind of just like doing it. I don't know. It's challenging. You're always looking for that guy that no one's going to drive to go see or no one thinks is good enough, Chad Greenway, Riley Reiff, Karl Klug. Nobody wanted Klug. Caledonia, Minnesota. Mt. Vernon. Chad didn't know, Am I good enough to play at Iowa? South Dakota is right down the road. Riley went through that, too.

You don't bat a thousand, but you really try to find that guy that has the characteristics and intangibles you're looking for, then has the ability, maybe is playing in a program where he's not getting coached as well.

But it's fun.

Q. Were you the evaluating guy on Nate Meyer?

COACH MORGAN: It's not that bad. Nate, I can talk about him now, he's an interesting guy. Eight-man football again, Player of the Year. Initially we had seen his transcripts. He was off the board. But he just really rallied and did a great job in the classroom.

You guys have probably watched him on tape. This guy is pretty special, he really is.

Q. Do you see him joining you?

COACH MORGAN: I tell you what, I think he's being recruited as a running back right now. We'll see. I think he could play a lot of positions.

Q. Is it kind of fun for you to find that gem?

COACH MORGAN: Absolutely. Absolutely. It's fun to find a guy, the diamond in the rough, the guy that maybe can help the team. What are the traits we're looking for, okay? Are there some guys out there that have them? Evaluation, if you just judge it on tape, it's hard. If you just judge it on camp, it's hard. You have to take it into all considerations. Is he a multi-sport athlete? Is he tough? How is he doing in the classroom? Does he fit the mold of the guys we recruit? Why has he been successful? Trying to identify those characteristics.

Q. Has your opinion of holding changed at all?

COACH MORGAN: I tell you what, I don't know too many offensive line coaches that teach holding. Certainly our guys have never been

taught that. They've always kept their elbows inside, which is hard.

But anyhow, I don't think it really has. I know many people have. It's all about separation. The difference is, offensive linemen in the run game, they're trying to get their chest on us, we're trying to separate. In the pass game, we're trying to get our chest on them, they're trying to separate. It's pretty simple.

Q. What do you see from Darian Cooper?

COACH MORGAN: I think he provides several things. I got an opportunity to go watch him. There was an offensive lineman at another location in red that won a national championship. We were recruiting him. Coop just stood out. There must have been 31 Division I, I-AA coaches, must have been last May, evaluation period. Here is this guy running back and forth. Looked like a miniature Mike Daniels. He just stood out. Then walking to the car, all of a sudden, Hey, coach, saying hi to you, all that stuff. You could see it there. You could see it on tape.

He's probably what most guys are recruiting. But he certainly is a guy that has great potential, I think.

Q. Was it easier for you to make the switch going from line to line?

COACH MORGAN: Absolutely. There's so many characteristics that are the same. I spent some time talking to Ron Aiken, who I value greatly. Ron was a D-line coach. I talked to Juan Castillo, coach for the Eagles. He said, You'll be surprised how many similarities there are. The leverage thing, pad level, footwork. It's been great.

When you get in and start teaching technique in the room, you can see it's all the same. We can tell the guy, Hey, this is what the guy is trying to do. Conceptually they can learn more, try to understand what the offensive guy is trying to do, which will hopefully make them a better player individually.

Q. How do the recruiting classes look for 2013, 2014?

COACH MORGAN: Am I allowed to talk about that?

I think there's some good recruits out there, I really do. I think there's some guys out there. There's always going to be guys that you

uncover, find, that are out there. I think there are already some guys that have considerable offers and so forth. I think we've got some good groups coming up, realistically.

Q. How much do you get from coaches calling you out of the cold?

COACH MORGAN: Absolutely, especially if it's somebody you have a good relationship, you value and trust. We follow up on most everything, most every lead. It's kind of nice, because when you go into a school, you're evaluating that kid, you're learning about that young man, but you're learning about everybody in their conference, that part of the state or class. Have you been at a track meet, have you seen anybody there? Have you been to a basketball game, is there a guy like your guy somewhere out there? You talk to the custodian, the principal, the AD, the secretaries. There's a lot of opportunities to get information out there.

Q. Do you see Steve and Mike being your leaders going into the spring then?

COACH MORGAN: I think Steve has earned that right based on the interviews with the players. I think they respect him for a couple reasons. Number one, his knowledge. Number two, because he has been on the field and played. Number three, because Steve really genuinely is a good guy and tries to help guys. That's a culture we're trying to build in that room, helping each other out. I think it's been positive so far. I think Dom and Carl have embraced that role. Even though their main job is to rehab, they've taken a leadership role in terms of helping other guys learn.

Q. How many NFL players here working out have helped you out with some of the players?

COACH MORGAN: I don't know how much they've done with the players. I know a lot of them are afraid to go by my door now. They're trying to go around. We only have one bathroom up there for whoever is upstairs, so they're trying to go the other way. I try to grab a guy, What do you think about this?

It's really been great. The nice thing, the thing that I miss the most, is I don't have the opportunity to be around Norm. He knows this. He's here on a part-time basis and so forth. I've been able to visit with Norm on several occasions, as much as he is around. But he's got a way, as

you well know, of taking a more complex item and making it simple. He just does a great job explaining things.

Yeah, we try to find as much as we can and try to make it simple.

Q. How did Ferentz sell this to you?

COACH MORGAN: How did he sell it to me? He just asked me if I'd be interested in doing it, and I said, sure. I think he knew the answer before he asked.

I did upset my wife and our daughters because I had found out and I didn't tell them, okay? They had to find out in the media. I couldn't do it because the coach didn't release it, didn't have a press conference. Our two daughters ripped me for not telling my wife. My wife understands. We don't talk about that stuff. That's just what you don't do.

Coach talks about it, just like the recruits. There's a right way to do it and the wrong. But I am in the doghouse, yeah.

Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports



...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

Iowa - 04 04 12

10