

**April 17, 2013**



An Interview With:

## **COACH BRIAN FERENTZ COACH REESE MORGAN**

**Q. Just talk a little about the offensive line.**

**BRIAN FERENTZ:** We have 16 players with us right now in that group. Out of those 16, seven of them redshirted last season. Nine of them did not. Out of those nine, every one of those guys has played a snap, at least, for us, in a competitive situation. Seven of them have started ballgames, but I think those numbers are a little misleading.

Really what we are dealing with is we have one guy coming back who has played significant time for us at a high level and that's Brett Van Sloten, and he's a guy I think can do a lot better for us in the future and I think he can agree with that statement. That's what we expect out of him.

The other six guys that have started ballgames for us, they have been sporadic at best. So there is some experience there but it's not a total wealth of experience, and once you get past that, you're dealing, out of the next nine guys, seven of them were not even eligible to play in a football game for us last season.

So it's kind of a tale of two cities plus a suburb with Brett. With that, I would open it up to questions.

**Q. Last year, offensive line, you had some key injuries, especially one game you lost two of them. With everyone healthy do you see that your offense could be different with everyone healthy, after dealing with a lot of injuries last year?**

**BRIAN FERENTZ:** Any time you have injuries, there's certainly going to be a drop-off in play, although that's not what any of us want, that's not what we are looking for. Right now we are fortunate. Everybody is healthy and practicing, but I think what happened last year is not unique, it's not unusual. Injuries are part of football.

I think the goal for us is to build the kind of depth to be able to play with that kind of consistency and not see a performance decline when you suffer injuries.

So we are fortunate right now to have everybody in the group healthy with the exception of Nolan. Everybody is working, and that's a good thing, but I think what we need to understand is what we're dealing with right now when we have five healthy guys, that's not going to be the case, probably in November, unfortunately. That's just the business we're in.

**Q. What are your expectations for Austin moving to the center position?**

**BRIAN FERENTZ:** We have high expectations for all our linemen, especially our centers. They kind of run point for us with the unit.

He's played a lot of center here in the past. You know, this is not a new transition. He's provided depth for us at that position last year. Then as a redshirt certainly he got plenty of work there in practice. It's not a totally new transition for him, other than he has not got as much work at guard.

But I think he's done a nice job so far. We are a long, long way from playing a game and we are a long, long way from being ready to play a football game. I'm pleased with how Austin has responded to what we have asked him to do.

As with all our linemen, we really need to continue to build moving forward here. But so far, so good with him playing center. At least we are getting the ball to the quarterback. That's a good start. Our last guy was not as consistent doing that

as he probably should have been.

**Q. What have you seen out of Brandon in the wake of his recovery?**

BRIAN FERENTZ: I thought Brandon was really starting to understand what he could be as a football player last year towards the end of -- taking snaps, competing for us. Unfortunately he suffered a little setback, happens to a lot of guys. Unfortunately it was not that serious. It looked worse than it probably was from a medical standpoint so we were able to get him back.

He's a guy that would have been working with us if we had done what we should have done, he would have been working with us in December and probably would have had a chance to play in a post-season game. So basically, he's been back with us in full participation going back to the off-season program and really end of December, moving forward through January.

So he's responding just as you would expect him to respond. Has done a very nice job coming back from that but very, very long way to go as a football player from a consistency standpoint and doing the things we need him to do on every play that the football team needs out of him. So far, making progress.

**Q. Talk about the depth you see developing at center.**

BRIAN FERENTZ: I think obviously Austin has done a really nice job there, and we started with him. Eric Simmons has done a nice job for us. He's really emerged and he's had a good spring. He's had a good spring. And he was a guy we weren't sure if he couldn't help us last year and coming out of camp we had developed a little bit of depth and we were fortunate in that regard that we were able to save a year with him. He's been a pleasant surprise and been pleased with that.

Obviously Conor Boffeli has provided depth there before. So we feel like we have really good options right now and hopefully we can build some more down the road. Tommy Gaul is a guy that continues to do a good job for us and maybe doesn't get as much recognition as the other guys but works plenty and does a nice job.

**Q. Brandon, working on upper body strength with Coach Doyle, how does that help him in his progress?**

BRIAN FERENTZ: I think any time, if you're talking about any of our linemen, the longer we can keep them in the program the better they

are going to become because of what Coach Doyle does in the weight room.

So for a guy like Brandon in his particular case, some of the injuries he was dealing with as a younger player were up in his neck and his upper body. I think naturally he felt a little bit behind in those areas where you try to keep a guy on the field. For him to suffer a lower extremity injury, and now it's the total opposite where he can't really do anything like that in the weight room and focus on the upper body, a good thing, definitely a really good thing.

But I have to be honest with you, I would have much preferred he could focus on his entire body for the off-season. I think it's really a statement of what Chris does and how they approach things up there.

The longer that we can keep guys that play for us up front in that program, I think the better they become. And the real trick is when we get them as football coaches, just don't screw up the work that they have done in the weight room, because I feel very fortunate to work here and be able to get guys that come down from that weight room on to the football field. There's plenty of places where they would be awfully jealous of those guys.

**Q. To come back to your alma mater and work for your father, I wonder if you can talk about what that transition has been like the last year?**

BRIAN FERENTZ: It's been good. There's a lot of things on a personal level that I really enjoy about being back in Iowa. I love this program. That's not a line for me; that's genuine. I feel a deep, deep love for this football program and the people that support it. So I love all those aspects of it.

Obviously we did not perform to the level that we had hoped to perform to or that we expect to perform to. So from that standpoint, very disappointing, very disappointing. But as far as going to work with your father every day, you know, I don't know. I don't know if it was exactly what I thought it would be or not. It's been fun. It's been good. No problems there.

Any of the other stuff, that's all things I knew coming in. And I knew those things coming in in 2001 when I was a high school football player that came here to play football here and just understood that there's a certain level of scrutiny,

there's a certain level of -- I don't know what you want to call it, being under the microscope or just, you know, you're going to attract a little bit more attention perhaps at times. Unfortunately for some other guys in my family, they are learning that the hard way.

But that's just the way it works. And I don't mind those things. I don't let those things bother me and I don't really get too concerned about them.

**Q. On the other hand, your counterpart on the defensive line switched -- does that rejuvenate guys -- the different kind of challenge.**

BRIAN FERENTZ: Coach Morgan is the Coach Morgan I always remember. I don't know that he needed to be rejuvenated or anything like that. I think you would be hard-pressed to find a guy that has as much energy or as solid and fundamental a teacher as Coach Morgan. I had the good fortune to play for him for three years and being around him after that.

I said it before and I'll say it again: I count him as a person who shaped what I became as a professional, what I wanted to be, a football coach. And so to be around him, I take every day as it comes. It's always an experience being around Coach Morgan. He certainly still has some good teaching points just like I remember.

But I think the work speaks for itself. We had a really young group there last year with almost no experience and we are kind of working -- obviously we are missing Louis right now and that's the guy for that group. But I see massive amount of improvement out of those guys every day just as you would expect.

**Q. What did you learn in practice Sunday? What were some things that you were wanting to look at for the offensive line? What were you impressed with? What do you need to work on?**

BRIAN FERENTZ: For us as a program, obviously we are excited to go to West Des Moines and be closer to our fans in central and western Iowa and do all those things. Specifically for the offensive line, it wasn't really a special practice but what people saw us do in Des Moines is pretty similar to what we do on a normal basis. What we do moving forward may or may not be different, from live situations, things like that, that certainly comes from up top.

But what I was looking for is what we are looking for every day: We want to see consistency, we want to see physical play, we want to be assignment sound, we want to be fundamentally sound, we want to be all those things. So if you look at our performance last year, at times, we did a really good job, up front, just talking about the group up front. At times, we did not.

But the bottom line is if you don't perform with consistency, you really can't expect to have good results, because just as in life, in football, if you're doing too much of the yo-yo effect, it's probably very much unlike being a heart patient: You do want to flatline a little bit as an offensive line. You want it to kind of be the same every play. That's what we are always looking to build.

And then the trick to that is, can you move pieces in and out and can you move guys in and out, and maintain a certain level of play. That's always the trick. I don't feel like we did that very well last year. I don't feel like we are doing it really that well right now. That's something we need to improve, because as we talked about earlier, I think, you know, if you sit around and you expect that not to happen, you're preparing for failure.

**Q. Is that part of the thinking with Andrew this spring? I think he played left tackle Sunday and usually he's inside.**

BRIAN FERENTZ: Well, Andrew started two games for us last year at guard -- I think I'm right. Maybe he started just one game but he finished for sure the other game. He's played two games at right guard. He'll be in the mix at the guard position and the tackle position.

But we need to have depth there. We need to have depth inside. We need to have depth outside. I think Andrew is a really versatile player and has done a nice job. It's really hard for bigger guys to go inside and have success, so I've been pleased with that. But that's always the thought is, what are our five best player, who are our five best players, what are their five best positions, but sometimes those two things don't always marry.

So how do we put the five best on the field. And that's why guys like Andrew, he played left tackle on Sunday, he played left guard in practice, he's played right guard in practice, he's played right tackle in practice and he'll continue to do all four of those things. Just like everybody that was playing the spots they were playing on Sunday,

they move around a little bit and play some other spots, too.

So that is always the thought. That's why you do things like that.

**Q. Looks like you guys were starting to get an identity of those back-to-back victories -- is that the way the offense and offensive line, seems like it was starting to come together and then the injuries came about.**

BRIAN FERENTZ: I think in those two football games, I don't know that that's only going to be our identity offensively. I think one important thing about offensive football, defensive football is true to some extent but offensive football, I think if you get too worried about tying your identity into certain personnel groups or being absolutely married to certain schemes, I think you can run into a problem.

I think what you saw in those two games is from an X's and O's standpoint, we were an offense that was functioning with a fullback, and we were able to create some success. But one thing about having a fullback in the football game, it's become not a lot of art but it's dying a little bit; the beauty of having a fullback in the football game is the defense will not tell you where you're going to run the football.

If you look at some of the runs we had success with in those two games, we are actually running into pressure, whether boundary pressure or field pressure but we are running into what you would call the teeth of a defense. We were able to do that a couple times, which then in turn opened some other things because now you can get into one-back sets, if you can take some of that pressure off your team by scaring them out of doing things, now you open up some of those other one-back runs where you saw Mark have a lot of success doing that.

I think to your question what we need to do to be successful is we know we have to run the football, however we are going to do that. So I think that part of the identity, if that's what you're asking, yes, as an offense, to be successful, we have to be able to run the football and run it when we want to run it and run it when they know we are going to run it, which that's the real trick.

So yes, is it always going to look like that? Probably not. And it probably wouldn't have at all times last year if we were still having success running the football. Probably is always going to look a little bit different and it may look similar or it

may be a total departure but whatever you have to do to do that, yes, absolutely.

**Q. You mention consistency, coaching a position where your father's had -- he had great success sending players to the NFL-- that has not really changed in the program. What is the onus for you coaching that position and trying to maintain that reputation for the offensive line?**

BRIAN FERENTZ: That's a good question. I understand the question. I respect it. My answer would be simple: For us, it's just like for our players, or for any of us here, worry too much about the past, certainly you'd better have reverence for the past and you'd better understand it and understand how it impacts what we are doing today in the future.

But what we worry about every day is the process and what do we do today that's going to determine our success in the future. And if that means putting guys in the National Football League, then that's a great by-product, but what we are more worried about here is graduating guys, winning football games. When all those things happen, then I think you have what you had here for a long time with my dad, with Coach O'Hara, with Coach Morgan, those guys, they were guys being taught to do things the right way, focus on the process, they all got their degrees.

They were part of winning football teams and they went ahead and had success in the National Football League. That's a great by-product of it. But for me what I worry about every day, the only pressure I feel is to give my best to the players we have to get them prepared for whatever we are doing that day, because those things will all stack up in the end.

But that's where I feel the pressure is today. What I'm worried about is what we are going to go do today in practice. Knowing that, having been around this place enough and being around guys like Coach Morgan and my dad that have had trust in the process, those things will all come.

**Q. You made the move from guard in 2004, you were always a center, and Austin is going through this now. What is that like?**

BRIAN FERENTZ: Whether you were out there or you've actually experienced it firsthand -- each one of the five positions is a bit unique. They

all fall under one umbrella and you play on the offensive line and that's what you do and we try to get our guys to understand that.

Basically at the end of the day, any of those positions, the fundamental is to execute what we are asking you to do -- are exactly the same. We don't train centers any differently than we train guards or tackles. We teach them all the same fundamentals, but it's unrealistic to say that positions don't have their own nuances.

I would explain it this way: The further you are away from the football, the slower things happen, which sounds silly, because nothing really happens that slow out there. But the difference is really that knew neutral zone, you are dealing with about a guy who is at least a yard away from you, or should be, and then potentially widens a little bit, too.

So you are dealing with whatever -- I'm not good at arithmetic or geometry or any of that, but you start measuring all that, it's a longer distance from Point A to Point B. You move the guards, Point A to Point B becomes shorter. You're still dealing with the neutral zone, but that guy is going to be a lot heavier. Usually you are dealing with guys that are shaded, head up or inside shades, they don't get too far away. When you are a center, when it's third down, it's great because people are playing some kind of even spacing and nobody is near you.

For the most part, when we go out to practice every day, our defense is going to have a nose tackle and there is no neutral zone and there is no space. Point A to Point B, sometimes your helmets are touching.

So I think that whole transition just becomes -- our more experienced players do better with it, because they have been asked to do those things for three or four years. Our younger guys, there's always a little bit of an adjustment period and it's kind of like I remember watching Steven learn how to swim. My dad picked him up and threw him in the water and he learned how to swim. Now, not to say there was negligence or anything like that he had the floaties on and all that. But basically, you put the guys in there, you throw them in, they splash around the water a little bit and they figure out it's not that bad, they are floating, they will live. So that's what the transition is like.

**Q. Can you talk about Ward and Walsh and how they have developed?**

**BRIAN FERENTZ:** They have done a really nice job. Ryan Ward really benefitted being able to spend time with us last year; by us, I mean, the travel squad. We took him to every game. He practiced with us. We didn't have a lot of depth at tackle, so he got a lot of reps. And Cole Croston, he kind of benefitted from a similar circumstance.

And when you're practicing every day with those groups who are getting ready to play football games, you're learning a little more football and you're being exposed I think a little faster than some of the guys that are down there giving our defense a look. Not that that's not important and not that they are not getting better but I think it happens for guys at a faster rate when they get to spend time with us.

He was the benefit of, he got a redshirt year and he got prepared to play a football game. Jordan, really similar thing, started two games for us as a redshirt freshman. Austin started eight or nine, whatever he started. For guys that young in this program, that says a lot about what they were doing before I ever even showed up here and what they have continued to do since I got here.

But very pleased with the way they work. And Ryan has come right in and fallen into line with all those things.

**Q. How have you found recruiting to be?**

**BRIAN FERENTZ:** It's different. Every recruit is different and how you deal with every recruit is a little different and what you're telling every recruit is a little different because people are different, and it's a people business, so you deal with all those things.

But the one thing I have learned after a year that I didn't know, as well, but I had a pretty good idea, it's just about relationships and it's about just kind of building, maintaining and cultivating relationships with people, prospects, parents, go down the list, coaches. It's been really beneficial to go on the road and be able to go into high schools and be around high school coaches.

Then it's a great learning experience for you, too, when you're on the road. You get to go around and talk football to guys, four or five schools a day, it's hard to beat. It's pretty good. I can't complain about that. There's plenty of things to complain about but that's not one of them.

**Q. Can you talk about Brett Van**

**Sloten's development --**

BRIAN FERENTZ: I know what you're asking. Brett is a guy who is -- I describe Brett this way. For a guy who had never started a football game here and really only played excessively in the second half of one, he plays like a guy that has a lot of experience. He plays more experienced than he is. He's extremely reliable.

We talk about consistency. He's a guy that plays at a level of consistency. He's got a long way to go, he can still improve a great deal but he's a guy who is doing everything we ask at all times and doing it to the level we expect. There's nothing I can say about Brett that's not positive, at least not behind closed doors with him.

**Q. There's a perception -- to the 21st century, how responsible are you for Twitter and things like that?**

BRIAN FERENTZ: Well, I would say we have been in the 21st century since Y2K. I bristle a little bit at the notion -- and I don't -- it's not personal.

But I do bristle at the notion that we are archaic or that our head coach is -- I want to make sure I pronounce this right -- is it Luddite (ph)? Is that the correct pronunciation? Because he's not. He's got an iPhone and he's got an iPad. Twitter, that's a personal decision everybody makes. Coach Morgan is not on Twitter; I am.

I think that's unique to every person. I really think if you saw our head coach on Twitter or doing those kinds of things, those aren't in his personality. That's not natural to him.

Alternate uniforms, that's not really in his personality, either; I've seen his closet. And I can say that because I'm his son. But in some -- I think what we learn is those things have no bearing on winning and losing, what you wear, what you don't wear. The notion that I have been responsible: The alternate uniforms have been worn here before, those were in the works. You can't get that done overnight. Those were in the works way before I got here.

The Twitter, Coach Johnson was on Twitter well before I got here. I think what we worry about here, what all of us worry about every day is just get a little bit better each day. Sometimes that takes on a social media -- I think we are learning, like the rest of the country, I do think we are not unique in this; the world is changing faster than we can even keep up with it. I know how to use Twitter and I just recently learned about Vine and I didn't even know about

that was in two weeks ago. You won't see me on there anytime soon.

Instagram, if somebody can give me a crash course -- I'm still trying to figure out. You can Tweet a picture, correct, can we all agree with that? So why do you need Instagram? Maybe I'm my father's son sometimes. It's changing so fast that we are trying to stay out there with it, but shoot, it's hard, we can barely keep up with our players sometimes.

**Q. Does that make a difference with kids in recruiting?**

BRIAN FERENTZ: That's how kids communicate. So yes, yes. Facebook I think is still pretty prevalent with high school-age guys. But Twitter and Instagram and these -- that's where these guys communicate with each other.

So, yeah, it does make a difference. You have to do it or else you won't be able to talk to them because they certainly do not like talking on the phone. That's changed a lot, a ton. That's something you guys can attest to.

Thanks.

**COACH REESE MORGAN**

REESE MORGAN: Today will be our tenth practice. Like the attitude of the guys, like the young men that we have in the room. They are hard workers. This is really a great time of year if you're a coach because you can teach, you can spend time working on fundamentals.

You can work individually with guys when they come up and ask for some assistance. And a day like yesterday where we have an extended period of time to watch tape and do some things, this is fun.

They are coming along. We have a long way to go. And you're coaching every player throughout spring football. You're not just focusing in and you're not getting ready for an opponent, other than playing our team and so forth. But it's been great.

I value and appreciate Eric Johnson who helps out and does a great job. We work well as a team and we are excited to get going with the guys we have. We do have a lot of work to go as many of you see when you come and watch us perform but I'm really excited about the rest of the spring and certainly about the fall.

**Q. As far as defensive linemen, where**

**does pressuring the quarterback rank as far as importance?**

REESE MORGAN: I think -- my wife would say that's pretty darned important I think.

That's really important and I think that's going to be a big focus for us. When you're playing the defense that we play, there's certain liabilities in a pass rush because we are playing heavy techniques and so forth. When we get the green light to go ahead with pass rush, we have to get there and there's an area statistically we have to improve upon, technique -- wise fundamentals, emphasis-wise.

**Q. Can you talk about what we were watching Sunday, different drills, different things, how did this come about?**

REESE MORGAN: I don't know what they were saying, different drills.

What you want to do, we are just trying to teach the game and every drill that we do is game-like. It's something that shows up on tape. I should be able to stop that particular tape and say: There's our drill right there. There's the block separation drill, you see that? Now, tell me what you're supposed to do? Now tell me how you're supposed to lock out. How does this relate to the drills we are doing.

So you make them game-like, and I don't think you do drills for drills' sake. We do very simple drills. We are going to do it from the first day they come throughout their program. It's no different than on the other side of the ball. It's about leverage and it's about footwork, pad level, being inside, playing hard, understanding your job and responsibility.

And I think could conceptually with some of the guys, I think they are starting to understand how their job affects the linebackers. So we want all four of those guys to know what the other guys are doing and how the linebacker reads plays and so forth.

So if you saw some different drills, it's nothing that we have not been doing.

**Q. What kind of bodies do you want to put on the defensive line?**

REESE MORGAN: Big, big, the big, fast athletic bodies. Being more specific though, we would like to have -- Carl Davis has got a really, you know, good-sized body. You would probably like to see him down a couple pounds. He does display quickness. He's having a very good spring. You'd like to have some guys inside, two tackles

inside, with some girth that can take on the double teams that can bull-rush and that can stop that inside run.

Then you'd like to have guys on the outside that can pressure the quarterback, to take on, to set an edge. And the run game, on typically the best offensive linemen that a team has, usually the most athletic lineman is usually at that tackle position.

So he's got to be able to set an edge on him and then have some leverage to work with. So we don't have any parameters on height, weight, anything like that. You look at Darian Cooper, I don't know what he's listed at, but we are eye level to eye level here.

Coop has got some good skills. He's still coming back from a little downtime but we would like to have some guys inside that have some girth that can stand up against the run. Louis played all last year, Trinca-Pasat, he's unable to play this spring. I doubt if Louis was too much over 260-something last year.

**Q. Consistency, such as with Carl Davis, how important could that be for your entire defense?**

REESE MORGAN: I just put together Carl's mid term grade here and we'll hand that out to him and that's the first point, consistency. Carl has really some special abilities, and I tell you what's really nice is, he's really buying into things. He's working harder. He's improving more but it doesn't come consistently.

When you have a bigger guy that's working and we are going up against up-tempo offenses and we tell them, when the ball takes off, you run; all of the things we are asking him to do are a little bit out of his comfort zone. He's worried about fatiguing, he's worried about that. We said, play yourself into shape and we'll do some extra stuff to do that.

I think he's really going to be an excellent player for us, I really do.

**Q. Do you see some players emerging as pass rushers at defensive end?**

REESE MORGAN: I think we have to continue to work to give them the tools that they need. Right now in our two-deep we have four true freshmen that a year ago at this time were picking out tux for prom and now they are going to be on the field for us in the fall.



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So bringing those guys along and taking some of the medium guys, the guys that have just been here a year or two; Coop has played a little bit but he has a long way to go. You have Riley, Bud, some of the guys that have been around, but they just need to step it up.

But I think we have to really continue to work on drills. We have to continue to give those guys tools to work on, be able to work on our games which we didn't do a lot of those the other day. And give them every advantage they can to be successful in the rush game.

Part of it, too, is a lot of times, in offenses, very few times are you going to get more than two and a half seconds. So you have to be able to get off the block, get some pressure on somebody and contain the quarterback which we need to do a better job.

Then we are asking a guy that's a defensive end, line up on the tight end, make sure you hit him, he doesn't release, release him. Then you have to take on the right tackle or left tackle and pressure the quarterback and you have to do that all in two and a half, three seconds. We are asking a lot of the guys but they are responding and we know that's an area that we have to improve upon.

**Q. How is Faith, is he playing defensive end?**

REESE MORGAN: He's everywhere. That's his first day at defensive end. We are trying some guys out. I think we would like to have the philosophy that we want guys that can play everywhere. Mike Hardy has been playing inside and we threw him outside without any practice. Faith we think is a guy for the future because he is very athletic, he can run, he's smart. He's just young, really young. He's played inside probably the first seven and a half practices. So we kind of threw him out there a little bit. We have been working with him. But he's got some unique abilities.

**Q. The comparison to the situation in 2007 and the way the team responded, had a pretty good year in 2008. Do you see similarities there in attitude and mind-set?**

REESE MORGAN: I really think our attitude and our mind-set has really been great. That's one thing you can sense or feel. There's no barometer to measure that, but you just like the guys. I think they are more comfortable with what we are doing, and you know, just walking around

the weight room, being around the guys, I think there's a very, very positive, very much everybody is together kind of a feeling and I think it's really kind of exciting, I really do.

**Q. What can this defensive line do to catch up there?**

REESE MORGAN: I think I have to do a better job of teaching fundamentals and responsible ties and so forth. And we have to have a plan where we can contain a great quarterback like Martinez, felt like we learned from that and made some improvement there.

I think we have who we have, okay. We have to create a situation where those guys can be successful, not ask them to do something physically that they can't do but have them understand that with great technique, awareness, and then using angles, you can put yourself in a much better situation.

**Q. Sometimes does it come down to making plays on the field, there's only so much you can do?**

REESE MORGAN: Yeah, you can, but I think that's the great thing about working with young people is the mental part of it allows, and if they have confidence, they can play at a higher level.

Coach has referenced Louis before. He was just a guy a year ago in December, he was just a guy. He showed up with a renewed attitude and he had really just an excellent spring. Was he a great player? No. But he made that transition and he had the confidence in his abilities. There came a point in time where he had to make a decision and he really did it.

Yeah, you have to make plays, but if we get guys to use correct technique, know what's going on, work their tail off and be relentless, those things you need. And you saw us last year using two groups later in the season. We got wore out and that's something we are going to plan on continuing to do. We think with the up-tempo offense, we need to do it; a tired guy that's out there with that first group is probably not as effective as a fresh guy that's coming in. That's our feeling and experience and so we are committed to doing that.

**Q. How much have you noticed --**

REESE MORGAN: It's hard, because



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traditionally, in the defense, there have been right tackle, left tackle, so we are moving guys around and we are taking guys inside and out.

So there's a learning process and there's a comfort zone that you get because you're stepping a certain way. You're strong with this arm or that arm, and now over on the other side, you have to do it. Things happen faster inside as Brian referenced, too. If you're an inside guy, things are going fast. If you're an outside guy, you have a little bit of time and you can catch up and you can work the edge more than you can inside. You're a little bit down the middle -- we have to get guys to work more inside. Does that answer your question?

**Q. How have the players been responding to the challenge?**

REESE MORGAN: They have been great. They want to be coached. Our guys have been awesome. We have the best job in the world. I mean, next to being a sportswriter, you know. (Laughter).

We never go to work. Honest to God, can you imagine that? We are doing something we love to do, we are getting paid, and it's a passion. How lucky can you be? How can all of us are so grateful to be doing, having this opportunity that Coach has presented to us.

We value that, and we have great guys because we get to recruit the guys we have, and if we get the right kind of guys, the intangibles, recruit those kind of guys, it really makes it a productive process but they are college students just like we all were. I think I spent six or eight years in college learning how to do things.

**Q. You had Dominic Alvis, might be close to a given -- how does it go down after that?**

REESE MORGAN: I tell you what, I'm glad you brought Dom up. He's having a very good spring now, he and Brandon are going head-to-head, two very good players.

I think he's embraced that challenge and that battle. He's doing a really good job. A year ago he was coming off that knee and early in the season was not confident. As the season went on, became more confident, more productive. But he is doing well.

It would be hard to envision him -- we have Drew out on the other side, a true freshman currently who we had to pull the redshirt off of last year when we had a series of injuries. We did not

want to put him out there. He agreed to do it. We played them in the last five games, just keep our rotation going.

He's been solid. Got dinged a little bit the other day. And then just we are kind of looking. I think there's a lot of good candidates. I think that's an area that we feel we need to really get some guys, that's why we put faith out there. You'll see Mike Hardy playing out there, Tsopanides (ph), you have Riley McMinn. So we have got a number of guys.

A year ago, we couldn't even -- we didn't even have two deep. We were struggling. We were taking guys in practice just putting a body there to do that, and there will be some of that time to time due to injuries and class conflicts with spring ball but I think we are trying to develop some depth there.

**Q. Body type, Riley at 6-7, Bud at 6-1, could body type dictate what you ask out of these guys?**

REESE MORGAN: I don't know if it dictates it, because you look at Dwight Freeney in the NFL, he's as good as there and he's 5-11. I think it's athletic ability as much as wanting to do it as much as I think leverage is important.

But you don't have to be a certain height, a certain weight, to play any position in football. Thank God, because we would be in trouble. Alabama and LSU would be the only ones being successful, and they get guys that maybe don't meet the NFL parameters.

**Q. How is Jaleel coming along?**

REESE MORGAN: I really like Jaleel. He is such a great, great young man. Earning his trust, getting him to understand and take coaching has been the challenge and he's been great at that, he really has.

He's raw and he's tough. That's what you love about him. He's got a lot of pride and he's competitive. But he's still a work-in-progress, as all of our guys are. And it's just been kind of fun to work with him and to see that and understand things.

He likes the physical part of the game and if anyone here likes that part of football, you would love a guy like that. You love it.

**Q. Since you're using so many young guys, how do high school guys compare now**

**to 12 years ago?**

REESE MORGAN: I don't know, I think it's an individual situation. And the reason I say that is, okay, why is it that we have four scholarship freshmen this year that came in? And two of them were national recruits, okay. One of them was a regional recruit. The other one was an 8-man football player from Gretna, Nebraska (ph) and how does that guy come in and play, you know?

So I think it's an individual thing where intangibles are involved, grasp and knowledge of the game is involved, where development is involved. And then that competitive spirit and that understanding, and everybody is at different levels. Being on the other side of the ball, you take a guy like Adam, he's teasing you, and all of a sudden he has a breakout spring, breakout senior year. He played a little bit, but that confidence level, being able to play fast, and not just playing fast, but knowing what to do and knowing how to do it and then just going hard.

So I'm kind of going around the bush, high school-wise, coaching-wise, I think the high school coaches do a tremendous job. I think they do a tremendous job at all levels and I really compliment the high school coaches in this state. Because certainly I couldn't coach junior high football at Northwest Junior High right now. The game has evolved a little bit and I think I really admire and respect the job that high school coaches do on the field, and especially the commitment they make to parents and kids.

**Q. Recruiting-wise, what Brian was talking about, you're kind of old school, you're not on Twitter. What is the challenge for you? You're a guy that gets in the car and goes and drives to high schools.**

REESE MORGAN: Well, you do a little more than that. You might want to -- we send pigeons out ahead of time to make sure the school knows we are -- what's that the telegram thing coming out, Western Union? It's really interesting because my wife is very techno-savvy, and I have texted our players to tell them there's a meeting.

I don't have an iPhone. I have an f-Phone, flip phone, so I communicate that way. I really think -- you really come down to relationships again, and I know Brian said that, I don't want to sound redundant. But just people know if you care about them. You don't have to write -- and we -- I think we take great pride in developing relationships with our coaches and our parents through the recruiting process.

And then there's a certain comfort level or a trust that comes in there, and you know, gosh, I don't feel like a grandfather or an old man or a tired guy, but like James Vandenberg said, gosh, he reminds me of my grandfather when we were recruiting and kind of made me look in the mirror and say, yeah, I guess I probably do.

The kids are young and this is a magnificent profession and we have such great people here and we have a great program and university itself; and I do have a Facebook account.

**Q. Nate Meier -- what do you look to get out of him?**

REESE MORGAN: I think he's kind of found a home with us, because he's played a couple different spots. If we can teach him how to rush a passer, how to defend blocks; you know, he's a very competitive young man, very talented young man. But also extremely raw, and he'll go behind blocks -- he'll a la Matt Roth and Mitch King at times -- I hope to heck we have a guy that's even close to -- and you don't mention him in that breath, because he's not there. But I think he brings the quickness, some toughness and competitive spirit to our group.

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