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An Interview With:

JIM REID

JIM REID: Well, first of all, it's an incredible honor to be here at the University of Iowa with coach Ferentz. The one immediate dynamic that was obvious was that we have really great, great young men and a terrific staff. It's really fun to come to work, and it's fun to coach the players. Everybody said what position are you coaching because I guess I was a little vague, and coach Woods and I are dividing up the linebackers, and frankly he's coaching the outside players right now, the outside backers, and I've got the inside backers.

We talked about switching it up a little bit after we get through a couple more practice sessions. He has a lot more on his plate as far as special teams are concerned.

Right now, I've got the two inside linebackers, and it's been great. Those are great guys. They work hard. They're focused, and it's been fun to be here. I appreciate going into staff meetings and having the day outlined, having the week outlined, got the month outlined, we know when we're going out recruiting, we know when our camps are. Coach Ferentz is super-organized, really focused guy, who has a great message to the players.

Sitting in this room when he gives that message, it gives you a little bit of goosebumps. I mean, every day he gives a great motivational tool to the players to get better, and it's been fun here the last two months.

It's been fun to watch Bobby Kennedy go out to eat and listen to that. But he's a great story teller. I know that he is, and he's got some great, great stories from some great places he's worked with some great folks, and he's going to have those stories next year about Iowa and about the

guys he coaches. He's an unbelievable teacher on the field. He's terrific.

Q. You've got some veteran guys. How much do you tinker with their technique or how do you work with them?

JIM REID: Well, we work very well with them because I was able to get kind of "cliniced" on each and every one of them from coach Woods, and you bring certain techniques with you within the structure of the defense, so we're not going to change much unless it calls for it. The guys use their hands very well, they read very well, and we're just trying to get better and more consistent on every snap.

Q. What was your perception of Iowa football before you got here?

JIM REID: My perception of Iowa football was this: hard-nosed, tough, run the football, throw play action pass, and play good, stout defense, and that's what it was. There's some programs you think of and you think of flash and dash and all the words that people use, and being a little bit older than most everybody in the room but not much, but some, I hope, I just saw it as what I just described: Solid technicians, great coaching, technique, detail, win the game on the last play, win the game in the fourth quarter, because you know and the players know what they're doing because of the consistency.

I alluded to that in the beginning. Coach Ferentz is consistent with every phase of the program: academics, weight lifting, conditioning, individual period, what we're looking for, group period, when two positions get together, teamwork. If you listen to him, he comes out there and he describes exactly what the tempo that we're going at in terms of tackling, tag-off, whiz, whatever the terms are, everybody knows it. Everybody knows what's expected of them.

Also, you have to remember, and I said

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this a couple of months ago, I coached Matt Roth, so when you coach Matt Roth, what you coach is exactly the impression I had of Iowa. So when I coached Matt, that kind of impression that I had initially was -- then I knew that it was true, the impression, because Matt was a tough, physical player who wanted to win every drill. I mean, it wasn't just on Sundays. He wanted to win every single drill he was in.

I guess people would call it a sponge. Just tell me what to do and I'll do it, and you could tell him what to do, he'd stay focused and he'd do it.

I'm just telling you, that Miami season where we made the playoffs and we had the greatest turnaround in NFL history, went from 1-15 to I think it was 10-7 or 11-6 because we lost our playoff game. He was a factor. I mean, you say, well, this guy played well, but wow, what a dynamic play. It was Matt Roth in at least five games down the stretch when we had to win eight in a row.

So when you think about Iowa football and you think about Matt Roth and now you have a real good feeling that everything I said about the consistency and the attitude, all that, is --

Q. How much of this spring is learning each other's styles and how much of it is Xs and Os?

JIM REID: You know, Phil Parker is a great guy, and he's a football guy. I mean, and he tells me what to do and I do it.

You're not going to find a better man or coach in America as an assistant coach than Reese Morgan. Absolutely tremendous and another football guy.

Eric Johnson, the guy is just awesome, I mean, absolutely awesome.

And LeVar Woods, I've been watching his children play basketball in the afternoons, and I'll just tell you, it's a great family.

I think the underlying factor is that we all love our players, and what we're all trying to do is develop them and make them as good as we can in every phase of their life, and that follows the message every morning that we hear in the staff room.

So development as a man, development as a student, development as a player, and then the great thing about it is there's a hunger for that from the players' standpoint. They pay attention. They want to please you because they know that that's the only way that you can win, to get everybody on the same page. So from the standpoint of trying to learn the system and getting

along with everyone, there has been nothing but great pleasure. Can hardly wait to get into meetings with them, can hardly wait to get into practice with the players. I mean, it's high energy and let's go.

Q. Bobby said he sensed the players were maybe a little bit embarrassed by what happened last season. Have you gotten that same sense?

JIM REID: I don't know about that. I mean, you know, I talk to the guys a lot, and there just seems to be a focus on like what we need to -- we need to get this better. As a matter of fact, one player said I'm glad that we weren't 6-6 but 4-8 because we have to do things better and we just can't almost get by. To me, I guess when I talk to them, there just seems to be more of a focus and a determination, perhaps not to let it happen again, so you could be right and Bobby could be right. But I don't think that anyone has ever said that, but it just seems to be a great motivation on the part of the players and their work ethic not to allow what happened last year to happen again.

Q. What are the practicalities of that? How do you change -- Coach Ferentz was in here a couple weeks ago and he mentioned tackling, getting off the field on 3rd down, he mentioned giving up badly timed big plays. When does the fixing start? What do you do?

JIM REID: Well, I believe -- let me answer it in two ways because I've been around and I've listened. I think it started the Monday after the last game with maybe a little bit of an attitude adjustment in terms of the weight room and then now it's just detail and technique, as I mentioned before. There's a focus here that -- there's a focus here that doesn't guarantee you success, but if you don't have the focus that we have right now, then you can't have success. Do you follow me? Did that make sense?

In other words, the players right now I think are tremendously focused, so now we move forward, and that's why you play the game. If the focus wasn't great, I'd be talking about something else trying to skirt the issue because then -- the reason why I don't want to do this right now is I am totally focused on today's practices. There's two items of technique that can really help us that I'm really fired up to teach, and I'm fired up to get into the meeting and talk to them about it. And the

other thing I'm fired up is they'll know and understand what I'm talking about so that when you take care of all the details, then now giving up the big plays and -- I believe that we lost two games on the last play of the game last year, then those things will take care of themselves. But without the focus, there is no chance. But I'm just telling you this is a great focused group. Linebackers, yes, but I'm talking about the entire team.

Q. Last year how much of the success of this year is tied to the defensive line and them holding up their end of the deal?

JIM REID: It all starts up front, and that's what a lot of people say, and I agree with that. So it all starts up front on offense and defense. And then the linebackers are the heart. They tie in the front and they tie in the secondary. On the back end are the guys that make the dynamic plays and have to have great daring and great understanding.

So it's all together, but looking you square in the eye, and I could be wrong, Bobby might have a different view, coach Ferentz might have a different view, but in my humble view, it all starts up front.

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