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An interview with:

COACH REID

COACH REID: First of all, let me say this, really miss Norm Parker. He used to sit in that office there and we spent a lot of time together. He's one of the great football coaches of all times in our profession. Let me also say this to you right off, this is obviously the most fun part of my job here with you, but coaching with Levar Woods could be really one of the great times of my life. He is not just an outstanding linebacker coach.

I just want you to know he's really an outstanding coach with great concepts for the entire game. For me to say that I came in here and could have gotten through last spring and fall without leaning on him because he's been in the system really since 1996, I wouldn't be telling you the truth. He's just an outstanding coach, and it's really great to be around him every single day.

We work well together, and I know that somebody mentioned this before. It's like father-son, because I'm that old. Dawned on me the other day that, gosh, I'm just not going to be able to do this another 42 years, because that would make me, as I was told by one of my players, that would make me 105. But let's not say never, because you never know.

But we've had a really good spring. So far three practices. I know that Coach Woods is really excited about the outside guys, and we're excited about the inside guys as well. We're making a lot of mistakes, but we're making mistakes playing very fast, and before you can win, you have to play fast, and then you have to be detailed in your assignments and your reads.

Every practice that we've had so far, Coach Woods and I feel like that we're moving forward. Okay. So we just need to continue that progress. Every practice we need to make a move

forward in some fashion to become better. We had three tremendous players last year, and you want to talk about a privilege in coaching, it was a privilege to coach all of them. Certainly James Morris, Anthony Hitchens, and now we're looking forward to continue to build a tradition of good, hard football that this program is known for the last 50 years?

Q. Going back to your relationship with Coach Woods. Do you find he's still relatively new in coaching compared to obviously the experience you have. Do you find yourself almost thinking of yourself as a mentor for him?

COACH REID: Well, I can tell you that Coach Woods is far beyond his years in the coaching profession. When you talk about recruiting, let me tell you the greatest part of recruiting is for the University of Iowa. Well, the foundation's success here, obviously, Coach Ferentz's 16 years as head football coach. You can take any coach in the league and add them together, any two coaches add them together won't come up to 16. So there is a consistency of success here.

But the other thing I tell them, especially young linebackers, is that you come here and you're going to be coached by an Iowa graduate who was not only a great player here, but also a great student here, and then played 7 years in the NFL. Not two, not three, not one, seven years in the NFL. You have to have something about you to do that.

So when you play in the NFL, let me tell you what, you're being coached greatly by some of the great coaches in the profession. So every year you're in there, you're gaining great, great coaching experience as well as playing experience.

Q. What can Reggie Spearman be, and

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what will it take to get there?

COACH REID: That's why we're coaching him. He has some great qualities. Last year you saw him rush the passer, some in our subpackages. Gained some really good experience. I'm not trying to dodge the question. I just don't know. But that's why we have spring practice. When you take a look at it, he wasn't here last year, so he had preseason, spent I think two weeks with Coach Woods at the LEO position and came back inside.

But this guy likes football. They all do, and this guy really likes it. He's in my office all the time. In fact they call him Reggie Reid. But he's a marvelous student, and he really is working hard both physically and mentally to become a great football player, and he'll get there.

Q. What part of this job do you love the most? You seem like a terrific teacher and your enthusiasm and emotion for the game is obviously still going after a few decades in this crazy business. What keeps you going, and what do you love the most?

COACH REID: I think it's the players. I was in the NFL, and I had some fun. I coached some great guys there. Joey Porter, who I love and still contact to this day and now he's an assistant coach at Pittsburgh, and Jason Taylor, perhaps one of the most classy people I've ever met. I mean it was amazing. A guy 5'7-1/2", from Medford, Massachusetts, going down and coaching some of these guys. I was humbled every day. It was just a privilege to be with these guys and also to yell at them every once in a while. Because on the street they'd hit you upside the head and knock you down.

But I missed recruiting. I missed watching growth from a high school senior to a freshman to a graduating senior in college. Then whether it's the business world, the education world or professional sports, I just missed that growth. One of the great inventions that I've liked so much is Facebook and now Twitter. But Facebook, I've been able to be in touch with players that I coached in 1974. Went to Cleveland to speak, and two of my former players came and listened to three hours of lecture just to be able to talk with this old guy for a couple of three hours afterwards. There is a bond that nobody quite understands and unfortunately some coaches miss, but there is the potential there to have really many, many sons. If you miss that opportunity, then really you shouldn't even be coaching this game.



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If you're in coaching here or anyplace, I should say, if you're in coaching just to make a paycheck and have a job, you're missing the point. You are a teacher. And more than just technique, if you want you can teach a little bit about life. You can teach a little bit about being a gentleman. You can teach a little bit about being a competitor. You can teach a little bit about everything that it takes to be a success. Not that you are one, but that you've been able to observe. You follow me here? Okay. We start out every meeting with some mind of a champion saying. Whether it's two words, five words, seven words, that's what you try to build, the mind of a champion, and not just in athletics, but in life as well. You want to be a good husband. You want to be a good father. Okay, this is what you do. It's the same qualities as being a good football player. Think about it.

And that's a long answer to a very short question, and I apologize, and I'll get off my soap box. Thank you though for asking that. Appreciate it.

Q. Quinton Alston's potentially a one-year starter for you. What has your experience been like with guys in the past who have had that one shot? I'm sure you've had it a bunch of guys that started for you as a senior. You have one shot to make its mark. What's that been like?

COACH REID: Quinton has a special quality. He has a great understanding of the game. I just want you to know that he coached James last year as hard as I did, because that's what we ask our players to do is to coach each other. What's really fun is on the sideline, if you watch, you'll see last year you would see freshmen taking notes, writing formations and they gave them to me at halftime. Now we do all of that too. But there is always something you could use.

Now I might not have found it until I was able to go through it in detail at halftime, but it was just amazing what they write down. Quinton has a great focus. He's got a great intensity, and right now he has a great enthusiasm. He's making all the calls, just like James did, because he did it with the second unit last year, and he's very, very anxious. We were able to also get Quinton on the field in Phil Parker's third-down package, which really was dynamic for us after the Ohio State game. He was a major part in that.

So I think he's really excited about it, and

he's tough, he's physical, and you know what? He has the respect of our players. When he speaks, he's like EF Hutton, people listen.

Q. Last season Anthony Hitchens several times mentioned what he learned from how you helped him. Things like reading keys and understanding the game better. How do you do that now with inexperienced players? He had a little more experience than these guys?

COACH REID: First of all, let me say this to you: When you're a linebacker, you can't be afraid to make a mistake. There are maybe two or three techniques that you have to master, and then you have to know what your opponent is trying to do to you. Anthony jumped in both feet, all in, let's go. He was in my office all the time as well. He's a guy that was so meticulous that he didn't want to take a bad step. He didn't want to make a bad read. Gosh, everybody does that. You know, a lot of times when guys make mistakes, we overcoach them. And you know what, the first person you have to take a look at is yourself. Am I coaching this guy correctly? And I told that to Anthony. If you were afraid to make a mistake in there, then that's the way we're going to be. We're going to be like that all year long.

I tell you what, he made some mistakes in the spring. We learned from them, and he became a faster, more aggressive player. A lot of those TFLs that somebody mentioned, they weren't blitzes at all. He knew what the play was and took advantage of it. I can give you hundreds of examples, but, hey, we let our hair down and we played hard. I tell you, the guy just played lights out. He played lights out, he was terrific.

Q. So are you telling the guys in line now?

COACH REID: Don't be afraid to make a mistake. Start the play with instinct. If your instinct is wrong, we'll correct it. Now that sounds almost like opposites, but, hey, you play with what you think that you see, and we'll clean it up after that.

Q. You brought up how you enjoy seeing growth in your players when you coach them. When you did use that third-down package set featuring Quinton and Reggie, what type of growth did you see from them on the field that leads you to believe that you have confidence in them going forward now that they're going to play more?

COACH REID: I can tell you honestly it's a one-word answer, performance. That's what we saw. We told Reggie to get down the field. Don't worry about it. James will follow you and will clean up any read that you might have missed. That is exactly what he did. He had some speed and he did it.

Quinton made a lot of calls, and then was where he was supposed to be. It was performance. I mean both of those guys really did well. When you say growth, you can -- something you may not see that I could see was all of a sudden maybe Reggie and Quinton walk into the meeting room with their chests out just a little bit more, with a little bit of a smile on their face. All of a sudden now it means a little bit more because they're part of it, and they deserve to be part of it because they worked hard. So growth takes a lot of different avenues that you need to see.

Q. Your final year at Virginia, some guy was praising what you had accomplished there. He said you convinced inexperienced players to play like veterans. Do you take that as a compliment?

COACH REID: I said that?

Q. No, someone said that of you as you were leaving Virginia. Do you take that as a compliment? Is that okay to be known that way?

COACH REID: Let me tell you this. We had nine new starters on defense, and we finished 28th out of 124 teams. I had a friend of mine who was on the staff, four of us left or five of us got fired there, and he said, one day he came up and said, you know, I can't believe that you lie to the players like that. I'm like, what do you mean? He said you're telling them how good they are and how close we are. I said, well -- this is during preseason, and I said, well, I believe that we are. He said, well, you're not seeing it right.

About halfway through the year, okay, we were doing pretty well. I said, well, I don't know. They must believe you, because I still don't think we're very good. But what a lot of people miss is destructive criticism leads you to destruction. It's not hard. Constructive criticism, players understand and will get better. I mean, if you're a player, you just want to be told what to do and what you want to be done in a positive, high-energy way because that's how the game is

played.

You go out to play to make a mistake, to lose a game? Of course you don't. Nobody wants to. You can't hold back. You've got to play with instinct, and you've just got to be told all the time you're almost there, if you're not quite there. You're getting there and it's close if you're not quite there. But there is always room for optimism. The easy way is to swear at them and blame them. The harder way is to look at yourself and make sure they're doing it the right way, and if not, then you fix it because you're the coach. Is that right? That's how I see it.

Q. Can you talk about the three technique? Last year it seemed much better getting off blocks. Things were clean and more physical. Will it change what you're trying to teach the three new guys?

COACH REID: No. Because can I tell you something? Coach Ferentz gives you like 12 minutes of individual time. So what you have to do is break out what's most important and then do it every day. Do it every day with great enthusiasm and great effort. So you talk about hands inside, we talk about foot work.

If you take a look at our success and our plays that we were successful in, it's because our base techniques were very good. You're not going to get -- you're not going to do anything well unless you do it all the time and it becomes a habit. That's a little bit about what I was talking about.

As a matter of fact, I'm just going to tell you this. If you want to at some point in time, I'll show you a clinic tape that I did. It will clear up for you -- I mean, you'll see exactly what I'm talking about. If you come out to practice again. I don't know when the next press practice is where you can come out, but if you watch the drills, it's the same ones we've done really for years and years. You watch the tape, and we do those well, we play well. When we don't do them well, and we don't, we talk about LSU. Okay, there were some things there, some plays and techniques that the inside linebackers missed on the first drive that we got cleaned up. It ran for a lot of yards. But take away two runs, and it brings us back. I know you can't.

Lot of people say that is a loser talking. But those two runs, we can credit an inside linebacker to one of them. Actually on the very first play. A guy that's made that play so many times. But goes back to individual technique. Coach Ferentz, 16 years here, four years at Maine, I think, six years in the NFL or five years in the NFL, has

always felt the same way, and he's exactly right. Before you can do this and that and spread, you have to be sound in your base fundamentals, and that's how we feel.

Q. Can you talk about John Kenny and how he's developed so far?

COACH REID: John Kenny, we moved him: in high school he was a terrific player on the outside and then we moved him inside. It's not an easy defense from the standpoint of making calls and John is playing the position that he has to make a lot of calls. He was a little confused last spring. Got much better in the fall. But we decided to redshirt him, and I think that was a good decision because he's playing really, really well right now, playing very well, playing faster. He's more sure of himself, and just doing a great job in school and every place else.

So you've got a confident player who you should watch during the spring game, number 47. Chad Gilson playing very well. Number 46, you watch him. And we've got Josey Jewell, and Laron Taylor, two guys that were with us last year, and then the puppies, Drake Kulick and Luke Lindahl. All those guys are giving us a great effort, and I can hardly wait for this afternoon.

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