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An interview with:

**COACH GREG DAVIS
and
COACH PHIL PARKER**

COACH DAVIS: Just a brief statement about spring. There's a couple of things you want to try to do in spring every year. One is get the base offense installed. Very similar to what you do when you open camp.

The second thing is to look at some things that maybe you evaluated in the off season. You studied somebody else's film, whatever. You want to look at those and see if they fit.

But one of the big things is trying to identify players that were either red shirted or second or third team in the previous year and see how close they're going to be to really help you in August.

So I think we've accomplished a lot of those things. We're not ready to play. If we had to play Saturday there's still too many mistakes being made. But the kids' attitude and the way they're going about it we've been pretty pleased with that.

Q. Will it look different with C.J. here?

COACH DAVIS: We'll stay with the inside zone and the slant play that Coach Ferentz has run since he's been here. So that won't look a whole lot different. You know, we have done a few things different in the passing game that we think fit C.J. in terms of trying to stretch the field. So I think there will be more of those kind of things. We will incorporate a little bit using his legs because he has the ability to run.

At the same time you don't ever want to expose a quarterback to undue hits, but we will do some things where we feel like we can take advantage of his legs. And I think he will do some

things just leaving the pocket on unscheduled runs.

Q. Coach, how have things changed for you with Brian being the running game coordinator? Does that change the whole approach to the offense?

COACH DAVIS: Not a whole lot. You know, in 40 something years of doing this, the offensive line coach everywhere I've ever been -- and I think in most universities has a large say in the run game. And so when we sit down and start game planning I have always relied on the line coach for suggestions, his thoughts and those kind of things. So, you know, I don't think you'll see a whole lot different in terms of that.

We are doing a few things formationally. We have tight ends that we feel like can be tough in mismatches, so we're doing things with tight ends and detached formations a little bit more than we have in the past.

But in terms of the weekly progression of what we do, not a huge change.

Q. You have a nice variety of running backs, different styles, that should give your different looks?

COACH DAVIS: I think that we have more running backs since I've been here in terms of guys that can go in and play. LeShun Daniels has dropped about ten pounds. He doesn't even look like the same guy. He's much more fluid in his cuts. He's running with confidence. Jordan Canzeri is back and healthy. Akrum Wadley has continued to get stronger. And has done a good job in spring training getting the ball. Obviously that was a concern. But he has the unique ability to jump sideways and make a five yard play into a 15 yard play.

[And] then probably the surprise of the spring has been Derrick Mitchell in terms of the running backs, moving from wide receiver, he has



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really done a good job picking things up. You never know how a wide receiver is going to react when he sees a blitz, Derrick did not shy away the first time. I think there's certainly a possibility that he could be the third down back. He could be the guy. Anytime you have a guy like that, it creates match up problems.

Q. How does C.J.'s ability to go down field benefit the gunning game? Why do you think you struggled last year?

COACH DAVIS: Anytime something is not as productive as you want it's not one answer. I mean there's -- sometimes the receiver didn't get to the secondary, there's always multiple reasons. I do think the ability to fake the hardball run in there and challenge deep will help slow the support down a little bit. And I do think our backs are a little bit more lateral movement guys.

And I think all those things will help as we move into the season.

Q. How has Tyler Wieggers developed this spring?

COACH DAVIS: Tyler got thrown into the deep end. Typically this would be a spring where he would be running with the threes, but he started paddling the minute he got in there. He's extremely bright. And he's done a really good job. Our quarterbacks have a lot on their plate at the line of scrimmage, both in the running game and in protection, and he's done a really good job.

Q. How much did it hurt to lose fullbacks last season and how did it affect your running game?

COACH DAVIS: There's no question it took a hit because of that. I mean anytime -- you could say the same thing about any position. How much does it hurt to lose the starting running guard? There was a reason he was starting, because he's the best you've got. And we felt those two full backs were really good, solid players. And with the two of them we thought we had kind of an advantage over some others and both of them missed some significant time last year.

We actually took John Kenny from line backer and moved him over. He did a good job. He's moved back now to the linebacker, but he did a good job there. But everything that John saw last year was the first time he had seen it.

Q. How has C.J. progressed throwing the ball down field?

COACH DAVIS: Well, I think he's much, much further along now. I think he is going to take the shots. When a pass play unfolds typically somebody is going deep. I know you don't all think that. But usually somebody is going deep. Somebody is in the middle and then somebody is underneath. And he's going to take more shots. He's comfortable doing that. We've encouraged him to do that.

At the same time we want him to play within down and distance parameters. It's second and nine and you've got a back sitting there open at five, yeah, you've got a guy one-on-one, but the corner's in really good shape. Is that worthy of taking that shot or should we bring the ball down?

He'll grow as he does it more and more, but we've been very pleased this spring at that part of your question.

Q. Have you seen improvement from C.J. in managing the game at the line of scrimmage?

COACH DAVIS: Absolutely. Absolutely. In terms of getting in and out of plays and doing the same thing in protections. He's very comfortable right now changing plays at the line of scrimmage and we're very comfortable allowing him to do that.

Q. How did Beathard go from being No. 2 to 1A, to starter?

COACH DAVIS: I think at the bowl game we just felt like at the end of the season, as we had said all along, we thought we had really two good players. And so we thought that, hey, we would open it up for the bowl game, which we did. And then they both knew going into the game that we were going to alternate the series. And so after the bowl game we decided that we needed to clear the air, so to speak. And with that in mind we sat down as a staff and decided to go in the direction we did.

Q. But what pushed him over? What made him No. 1?

COACH DAVIS: We just felt like he gave us the best opportunity to win.

Q. What changed over the course of three or four months to make you come to that

conclusion?

COACH DAVIS: We just felt like he gave us the best chance to win. It was not like an epiphany. They had been close for a long time. We just felt like what we do at every position, who did you think gives us the best opportunity to win. And that's what we felt after the bowl game.

Q. Do you wish you would have used C.J. more during the regular season?

COACH DAVIS: Hindsight is usually 20/20. So I think there's all kind of things we could have said, yeah, we could have done this, done that, but we're happy with where we're at now.

Q. This is an important position. What thoughts went into the decision?

COACH DAVIS: I wish I could tell you one, two, three, four. You have two good players. And we just felt like that C.J. was at a point mentally to the question of getting in and out of plays, that he had cut that gap down. We felt like physically that there was a bigger upside. And we're talking about a guy that's a really good player in Jake.

We had to make a decision and sometimes it's what does your gut says. In words it's not as easy as this, this, or this. Part of it is what we've seen every day for the last couple of years and we just made a decision.

Q. Is part of it wanting to take the ambiguity out of quarterback?

COACH DAVIS: You need to ask Kurt that question. But I think that he felt like as the head coach that it was time to make a clear decision. And instead of taking it into spring camp.

Q. Are you surprised that Jake reacted the way that he did?

COACH DAVIS: Quarterbacks are a different position because one plays. Typically when you have a couple of guys battling and once a decision is to be made it's not unusual for the other guy to transfer. Jake is an extremely bright guy that is going to graduate in May. And he just wanted to play. And he was very up front with us. And we were very up front with him. And so last time I saw him two weeks ago. Wished him nothing but the best.

Q. Does C.J. delivering the ball have a chance to make this wide receiver group better?

COACH DAVIS: Yeah, he made a play in the Pitt game that was pretty special. It was a third down situation and they out numbered the protection with the blitz and the first blitz receiver actually was covered. So he had the whole ball knowing that the blitz was free. And then delivered the ball down field to Ray for a big first down. It was a huge play in the game. And it was a talent play. I mean he has really good arm talent.

To your question, one of the things that we worked on this spring, and will continue to work on is where the ball is delivered. Because a lot of times a 12, 13-yard play may only be a 12, 13-yard play if the receiver has to chatter his feet, turn his shoulders, whatever. And yet that same play may turn out to be a 15, 16-yard play if the ball gets out a little bit quicker before the separation is closed. So, yes, I'm hopeful that we'll have the ability to have a few more run after catches.

Q. Is there a conscious effort to make Tevaun Smith that go-to playmaker that Marvin McNutt was a few years ago?

COACH DAVIS: We're moving Tevaun around formationally, that was one of the things that we went into the off season in trying to find some ways to put him in spots that he hasn't played in as a slot receiver, for example. When he's an outside receiver it's easier to low coverage to him. It's harder to do that to a slot receiver. So, yes, we've done some things that we feel like will give him some opportunities to get more advantageous coverages.

Q. Do you have any other sleepers that we may not know about?

COACH DAVIS: Andre Harris has come a long way this spring. He's still inconsistent, and something that he comes in after a practice of a week, and said you took a big step. And the next week he comes in, and you've stepped back. But he's getting to play more with the first and second group, so he's getting more opportunities. And so we're encouraged by what he's done.

We also moved Jonathan Parker over to a full-time receiver now. And he has made a lot of progress there. He's not ready to be a full-time receiver, but he does give us the ability in some wide receiver screens and the blast week series

where he's on the field more than just for those kind of things.

Q. Is C.J.'s football IQ underrated?

COACH DAVIS: I'll tell you all a story. I had Major Applewhite and Chris Sims in Texas. And every time Sims made a throw, and Major pointed this out to me later when he was coaching it us. He said every time Sims made a throw the comments on TV was what a great throw. Every time Major made the same throw it was what a great read. And so if you have a good arm then the natural is, wow, what a great throw.

The fact is C.J. is really bright. He's extremely bright. And I don't think we'll lose anything there in terms of getting in and out of plays and those kind of things. I think you'll see the same thing, stepping away from the center, and I don't think you'll notice any difference there.

Q. Will you have a way to quicken the learning process for Ryan Boyle or Drew Cook because of the lack of quarterback depth?

COACH DAVIS: We'll just have to speed him up a little bit more than normal. We've told Ryan and Drew both that they probably will red shirt. We would like for them to, but we'll just have to see what happens. They'll both be here this summer, and we'll see where they go. They're both bright guys, I know that.

Q. Did you coaches try to discourage Jake Rudock from leaving?

COACH DAVIS: Jake took a couple weeks, and I think part of the reason coach wanted to do it during the semester break was where he would have an opportunity to sit back and reflect and decide what was best for him. We had conversations during the time, during the break, and he came to a decision and we honored that decision.

Q. How much separation is there from Matt VandeBerg, Jacob Hillyer, Tevaun Smith and the rest of your receivers right now?

COACH DAVIS: Quite a bit. I think those three guys are guys that we feel really comfortable on the field. And whatever the call is we don't worry about it. Matt VandeBerg can play all three spots, check can play the two outside spots and now with what we've done with Tevaun in the spring, Tevaun can play all the spots. So -- and then when you go below there it's an untested

quality. And again, that's what spring is for, and that's what fall camp is for. But there's an opportunity, I think, for one of the young receivers -- one of the signees, if they can come in and earn receiver is that a spot that guy can play early, if they come in and pick things up. Everybody has had freshman receivers be able to come in and play.

So those guys will have to be given an opportunity when they get there.

COACH PHIL PARKER

COACH PARKER: Good afternoon, appreciate you guys being here. We're going on our 13th practice today. And we've made a lot of progress from the first practice through the 12th, still developing our depth. Who is going to be the first team, who is going to be the back-up guys.

But right now we've got three more practices to go, and we've can accomplish a lot in the next three days if our guys focus.

Q. Where do you feel like you've improved the most this spring defensively?

COACH PARKER: I think moving the line backers around, moving Bo Bower back inside and Ben Niemann coming up, and I think the linebacker group is working well. Josey Jewell went back to mike as a full-time guy, which he can play both. I think the depth at the linebackers really helped. I think our defensive ends have really improved through Drew Ott and Boone Myers. Both of them did a great job. Matt Nelson has really made a lot of improvements as he developed as a freshman and he's just getting bigger and stronger, and we're really pleased with the way he's making progress.

And Jaleel Johnson inside, he's made a step forward. And Bazata has done a good job. They're all moving forward a little bit. I think that linebackers are getting in the pieces of learning how to do it, moving Bo back from outside to inside. It's not easy to do, it's different reads. And your keys are different. So he's really developed over the last couple of weeks. We're happy with that.

Q. What did the defense learn coming off the Tennessee game?

COACH PARKER: What we learned? Obviously we didn't show up. I think obviously

we're prepared, and there's times when we're in position to make plays and we didn't make it. And then just tumbled there. Kind of reminded me a little bit of what happened in the Northwestern game a little bit when we started out and it was like 21-0 in the first quarter. 21 or 28- nothing, and then it snowballed on us a little bit. Defensively there it was the other way around.

Q. When you say you didn't show up, how do you explain that?

COACH PARKER: Well, we just didn't play Iowa football the way we were used to playing since I've been here. Making good tackles, and we were in position at times and we just didn't make it. A credit to them, they made some plays. But just nothing that we're used to playing, given the big plays. And we've got to concentrate and focus a little bit better doing the play and being in tuned to what is going on.

Q. Your perimeter defense, you guys had some struggles there last year, everyone kind of jumped the scheme, you guys are doing the same stuff, just trying to get better?

COACH PARKER: I think a lot of people tried to attack us from the perimeter because it's hard to run up inside. They do different things to try to affect you, and try to stretch you out a little bit more and we've just got to be better prepared and have some answers for that. And I think we worked on that.

But I think it all starts with fundamentals, and that's what we've been working on, and I think playing a lot of basic defense, running the ball, make sure you've got your eyes where they need to be and read your keys, and I think that's the goal of everybody on the field. It's hard to play without your eyes if you don't really use them, and what information they're giving you.

Q. How did that motivate you in the off season, leaving a bad taste in guys mouths coming back?

COACH PARKER: I don't think we approach things differently. We're going to be coaching the way we coached for the last 16 years. Is it disappointing? Does it hurt? For a while, yeah. But you have to get back up and get back after it and start coaching the guys the way we've always coached them. I think guys are more involved. I think the players are more involved and in tune to what they have to do. I don't think you

change the way you coach. I'm not going to change the way I did it, my approach. You always look the a your scheme. Is your scheme good? What's the breakdown? There are some things we've got to fix.

Q. Would you say that the TaxSlayer Bowl and Nebraska games was a matter of inexperience?

COACH PARKER: You know, I think some other guys that didn't make plays in the game, too, but it's hard for a young buy. And obviously those guys got a year experience on them, going into their second really full season. So I think that experience is going to help them and they'll be prepared for the game and going to a bowl game, you're sitting there playing, it's hard for these kids. But I think as they grow, you've got to move on and build from it and learn from it.

Q. Tennessee and Minnesota blocking a little differently than they had previous game. Minnesota was a little more downhill team, but they went outside and Tennessee seemed to be more in and out. Did you think they saw something in your speed or your personnel that allowed them to go on the perimeter more?

COACH PARKER: I think there's a lot of people, that you go back to four or five years ago, Michigan was doing the same thing to us with the quarterbacks that they had. They were trying to reach the perimeter more instead of running inside. And I think they're trying to give you misdirection keys and stuff like that. And sometimes they're not even blocking certain guys, trying to just get outside and trying to out run you. You have to prepare for it and what you're going to see. And I think we've improved on that. I'm happy with what direction we're going in right now.

Q. Talking about increased pace, how do you stress that?

COACH PARKER: Well, it really comes down to basics. Football is a simple game. You have to make sure you get lined up, you get a good stance, your linemen, your keys. And you go through your read progression. The most important thing to me is effort to the ball. And everybody says what kind of effort do you take? You've got to make sure when you're tracking a guy that you have your eyes on him to track him and you've got to read his body language and see

if he's going to cut back or what direction he's going.

One thing I'm looking for, I want to see effort. I don't care if you make a mistake, you have a bad alignment. That stuff is going to happen, you get blocked, but what's your effort at the end of the play as you're running to the ball, that's what it's going to come down to.

Q. Was the TaxSlayer Bowl more about execution?

COACH PARKER: I think it's a combination of both. I can't say we were loafing out there. I didn't see that. I didn't see the effort. Not that I did see the effort, they hit us on some plays and got up and then started snowballing little bit.

Q. Have you seen separation between Taylor and Snyder, is it neck and neck?

COACH PARKER: Well, we've been moving around a little bit. And we kind of tried to figure out what's the right combination. I think Snyder and Anthony Gair are trying to figure that out, too, seeing if they're in the right spot, to create some competition. But the last practice I saw some stuff I liked out of Brandon Snyder a little bit. So we'll see. It's still a long ways to go.

Q. You talk about eye discipline, how do you gauge that? Especially with young linebackers, last year those were in before their time, and how do you gauge improvement? What's the approach?

COACH PARKER: To me it's preparation. And you would sit down and watch them on film and see where their eyes are at sometimes. If maybe a guy pulls one, he doesn't see it, how come he didn't see it. To me with the secondaries and safeties, I have three layers of looking at them. Look at the offensive line, back field action, quarterbacks, and see if they're seeing the same thing I'm seeing. You can tell. What's the offensive line doing, what's the running back doing, what's the quarterback doing, are you picking up your reads fast enough. You can tell if they don't react. And it's all film study and rewatching the film. If you're slow on your read, how can you not see that, and why. Are you doing enough studying of the film. Are you paying attention in practice.

Q. Is Miles Taylor your starting strong safety if you played a game on Saturday?

COACH PARKER: We've still got a couple more days. Today he might go out to start. I think we're going to rotate some guys in there and give them a chance with the first group over there to see where he's at.

Q. You have veteran corners, too, not only King and Mabin, King seems solidified, Mabin had up and downs, good and bad. Is he solidified as the corner?

COACH PARKER: I think he is. You look at the corner position, you have three or four guys, maybe five guys coming up. I think Fleming has really made a push this spring to where you could categorize it, there's only two now playing, can you get three of them on the field at the same time is something we always look at, especially with the personnel group. But I think there's three of them that are above the other guys right now with Mabin and King and Fleming. And then Draper. And I'd like to see what Rucker does. I think we'll see more from him.

Q. Seth Wallace, is that a move that you kind of needed wearing both hats, the corner hat and the secondary hat?

COACH PARKER: Yeah, I think it helps. I've worked with him before, he knows how I'm coaching. So that's helpful. It gives us another set of eyes back there. If you're playing with four or five guys, I might not see something on one side, he can see it. But it gives me an opportunity to go down and see that, so it kind of alleviates a little bit of my help to go down there and see what's going on.

Q. When you first came here there was only one spread team of Purdue, then Northwestern came along. How has that changed in your philosophy, the philosophy of the Iowa football team that you're incorporating Raider packages. How much deviation is there now than what there was 15 years ago?

COACH PARKER: Well, there's a little bit more. Getting more speed on the field has helped over the last couple of years. But we didn't do it, really. It still comes back to how you're coaching with the first and second down. The reason why we went to the Raider package was it was something that we needed more linebackers on the field with speed. And that's what helped us out. And we kind of continued with it and

expanded on it. But, yeah, it's a little bit different. Every team you face right now there's going to be a spread. There's only a couple that start run downhill.

Q. Has Jordan Lomax kind of taken over more of a leadership role?

COACH PARKER: He's done a great job of his leadership. It's hard to say when we first started back there a year ago, it's hard if you haven't started at that position, to go ahead and say, hey, I know what we're supposed to be doing and taking a leadership role. I think you've got to be a starter for a year and get that respect. But I think he's earned that respect. Just the way he carries himself, the way he practices, the way he studies the game, I think he's earned it.

Q. Seems like in the Saturday practice, he seems more comfortable?

COACH PARKER: Yeah, it's not easy to switch from a corner to a safety. A lot of people say it's a defensive back position, but it's a totally different read for you. You're reading a different angle. You are responsible for a lot more people. And free safety is more of the dictator, he's responsible for the back seven angle to make sure they're in the right stuff. So there's a lot of responsibility making calls and communicating, and I think he's getting more comfortable understanding what he needs to do.

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