

**March 25, 2015**



An Interview With:

## **COACH KIRK FERENTZ**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** Sorry to learn about Father Bob. I wasn't aware of that. Anybody that's been around Iowa sports for a long time knows what a great person he was and just a great enthusiast for all of our teams. Very sorry to hear about that.

On a happier note, it's been great to operate out of this facility. It still feels kind of funny doing press conferences here, but it's really been great for our entire football team, and it's been fun for the older guys coming back here, which a lot of them trickled through here the last couple weeks, for them to get exposure to this building has just been first-class and really been helpful, so we're very, very appreciative to everybody that was involved, whether it be the people that worked on the building, certainly all the funds that were raised for this. It took a lot of time, effort and teamwork to make this thing become a reality, and it's been absolutely fantastic, so we're very, very appreciative of that and hope to keep it looking great here for decades to come.

We've had our seniors have their pro day on Monday. I think that went really well and want to wish them all the best as they chase the guys involved in that chase, their dream of playing in the National Football League. I think it's an exciting time for them. They've put a lot of effort into that, and then last thing just as Steve mentioned we will be going back to Des Moines trying to make it a little bit easier for people from central Iowa, western Iowa, across the borders, maybe to come up and watch the team if they choose to, so we're excited about going back there. The people at Valley High School have been tremendous the last couple years.

Looking forward to that in April.

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I think we've had a really good winter program. It's run basically since we got back here the day after Martin Luther King Day, and the guys have done a really nice job handling that phase. Everybody is coming back off spring break and we're one of the few teams I think that hasn't started spring ball yet in the country, and anxious to get out on the field today.

The guys have worked hard. We've got work to do certainly like you do every spring, really excited about the group that we have coming back. I think their attitude has been great, work ethic has been great, and looking forward to getting on the field and beginning the next phase of putting this team together.

**Q. First thing that jumps out which is hardly a secret is Jake Rudock does not appear on the depth chart. Is he with the program, and if he isn't, when did he make the decision not to be?**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** Jake is still with us. We've had conversations a couple different times, and he's in a really unique position, not totally unlike Cody Sokol a year ago, and he's exploring some other options at this point with our support, and certainly not encouragement but support, but we'll work through the process.

Until he decides what he's going to do definitively, we'll just keep him outside the program at this point.

**Q. When did he make that decision?**

**KIRK FERENTZ:** It's been ongoing. It's been ongoing since probably somewhere in the range we had the last press conference. I think that's probably when we started talking a little bit about it, and he's been training here, working out. He's not banned from the building by any stretch yet. I think right now he just kind of has to finalize what his plans are going to be, and we'll move from there.

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**Q. He's still officially with the program, though?**

KIRK FERENTZ: He's on our roster, but I've certainly granted him -- permission is not the right word, we've signed releases or whatever the appropriate terms would be to explore options. Bottom line is I want him to be happy about his opportunities in front of him.

**Q. In January when you sat down with the quarterbacks you said you talked to them both, was there a definitive pledge is probably the wrong word, but to go with C.J. Beathard? Is that what triggered Jake looking --**

KIRK FERENTZ: When we released the depth chart in January, I can't remember the exact date, it was probably midweek after the ballgame, whatever that would be, 5th, 6th, somewhere in that point. We had made the decision; we talked to both quarterbacks at that point, and that was part of the thought process behind that, giving them an opportunity to handle it in an appropriate manner, whatever is best for them.

Again, I look at the quarterback position as a little bit unique; it's a little bit like a point guard maybe in basketball. On basketball teams there's a lot of transfers at all positions, but I go back to Cody's case where I do have firsthand knowledge of what happened there. I got that totally, and if Jake's heart is not totally in being here, then it's probably best that he does go somewhere else. But right now it's just -- I think he's in an exploratory process at this stage.

**Q. Was your sense at that time that no matter which one of those two you chose to start --**

KIRK FERENTZ: Not necessarily, no. I didn't mean to cut you off, but I think I know where you're going on that. Not necessarily. I think a lot more was maybe made in the media than anything I was sensitive to. That never really factored into it. It's always a reality. It was a reality last August when we made the decision to go with Jake.

You know, ultimately you do what you think is best for the football team, and we've all spent a lot of time talking about it, thinking about it, not unlike we did a year ago or even two years ago when we've had the competition going on.

**Q. All last season you talked about both quarterbacks but you always came back to the point that Jake was your No. 1 guy,**

**clearly the No. 1 guy. Exactly when did that change? Was it in the bowl prep that they got on the same line?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You know, if it was in the bowl prep then we would have started -- if we felt like CJ was the best guy to win the game, we would have gone with him in the bowl game, but we did make the decision to let them compete after our last regular season game, let them both compete throughout December, and we also made the commitment we were going to let them both play in the ballgame, and that's what we did. You know, and then at some point you've got to make a decision. You've got to name a starter. I think you do. You could have played it a couple different ways, but I think in the best interest of our football team, after that ballgame it was best to name a No. 1, name a No. 2, and then move on from there.

**Q. If Jake does leave, how concerned are you about experience and depth at that position?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You know, we've had a rare circumstance. I've said many times publicly last year that it was really close competition. That's unusual when you have that. And I think I also said, I know I've said, we have total confidence in both guys. I can't say that right now the way the depth chart is, but I couldn't say that in 2002, '03 or '04 either. That's just the reality of it; that's typical of most of our positions here. When you've got one, two or even three like Ohio State did, that's a really unusual circumstance. It's part of the reality of things.

**Q. How does a reversal like that happen, when a quarterback has started two years for you, throughout the season I know you talked about playing both, and then that reversal happens in January. How does that work?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You look at all the information you have in front of you. You analyze what you have available, the information you have available, and then you've got to make a call at some point. Whatever date that was, it was probably -- the call probably got made before that because I wanted to communicate with both quarterbacks. We made the decision then. In my opinion that was the best thing to do for our football team at that given point, so that was the driving force behind it. It's been close between

both of them. They're both really good quarterbacks. They're both tremendous young guys. I've been saying that consistently. I still feel that way, and should Jake leave, I wish him all the best. I just want him to be successful and happy, and you want that for every player in your program certainly.

**Q. If he decides not to leave, and I don't know what the percentages are there, but if he decides not to leave, is it a competition again?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I think it's always a competition, but just like we were committed to Jake when we started the season last year, it would be just a flip right now, and we'll move forward, and that's the call I just felt we needed to make back in January.

**Q. Why did you feel like that was important to make C.J. the guy?**

KIRK FERENTZ: It's just how I felt, and that's where we were at on January 4, 5, 6, somewhere in that ballpark, 2015. Things are always changing; nothing is static in what we do. Your team is always changing, the program is always changing, that's just -- and when I say I, it was a group decision. We talked all that out in great detail, and it's like any decisions we've made in 16 years; there's no way of knowing if you're right or wrong, you just have to do what you think is best at that given point based on everything you know.

**Q. Last year to me was kind of an ambiguous situation between the two quarterbacks. Did you want to make a decision early so out of fairness, because Jake had played well for you couple years and in case he wanted to explore his options or do --**

KIRK FERENTZ: That was part of the discussion. Not the entire discussion but that was part of it, certainly.

**Q. Has Jake sought a release to Michigan and would you stand in the way of him going to a Big Ten school?**

KIRK FERENTZ: As I said earlier, I signed an open release -- I didn't say open, but release is the right word. I don't want to use the word permission; that's kind of like I'm a czar or something like that. We signed a release basically with no strings attached. If he chooses to leave, I want him to have opportunities. I think that's the only fair way to do this, the best for thing for him.

**Q. Did C.J. show enough during the bowl game to be named the No. 1 guy or was it throughout the season that you saw it?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Well, it's been ongoing. The competition has been good all the way through, and that's what prompted us in December to make the statement we did. We said we were going to practice them both and let them both work with the 1's and play them both, and again, it's just a very fluid process. That's just the way it shook out that month, and again, I felt like we needed to bring some clarity to the whole situation there early in January, and that's what we did.

I'll take one more question on that and then we'll move to the rest of the team. We've still got 100 other guys we've got to talk about probably.

**Q. Has this decision energized CJ?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I don't know if it's that -- we'll find out, I guess. We'll see what he does out on the field, but he's done a good job, and he's been doing a good job. Again, it's a case, I think, where we had two really capable players, and that doesn't happen often.

I'll transition right now. We've got really good depth at the fullback position. There's a big news flash for you, huh? We've got three fullbacks. Pretty sexy, isn't it? It doesn't happen very often where you have guys that have playing experience and you know are going to play well. I think that's what we had at our quarterback position last year. That's probably the only place on the depth chart right now where we do have that kind of experience if you look at the guys that we have there.

**Q. What is a running game coordinator and how does it work differently than it did last year?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You know, it's probably more of a title than anything else. I think we've worked pretty well together. Everybody has a chance to give input and what have you. It'll give Brian a little bit more -- I don't know if authority is the right word, but a little bit more responsibility probably to just organize our run game, tweak it a little bit, and so it's probably more of a title than anything else, but I think the staff works really well together, but he'll kind of have some final say on some run game stuff, probably he can veto my bad

ideas probably as much as anything.

**Q. Will he call plays or --**

KIRK FERENTZ: No, Greg will call plays, and that won't change at all. And really the way we operate won't change an awful lot, either, from the way we work during the course of the week.

**Q. You lost two tackles on both sides of the ball who are very important in what you're doing that have NFL futures. Is that maybe an area you really are watching closely?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Absolutely. And it's interesting if you look at our team, we lost prominent players at a lot of positions. Like every year, you always lose good guys. You think about Kevonte, who's a record setter at Iowa, he graduates; you think about a guy like Mark Weisman and what he's done for our football team not only on the field but in terms of leadership, just intangibles, work ethic, all the things that he models so well. And I think he'll have a really good career, probably at the position he belongs at. He's an NFL fullback.

Flipping over on the other when Quinton Alston, who is kind of like Mark except Mark played more, but Quinton would have played more had we not had James Morris, Kirksey and Hitch, but James in particular playing the middle linebacker position. But Q has been a good leader for us for two years and obviously played well last year.

But yeah, the ones -- look at the four guys that went to the combine, tackles on both sides, it starts there. And those are premium positions on both sides of the football. But the good news is I think that we've got guys that have an opportunity to grow into really good players, and they've been here for a while now, so to cite the offensive side of the football, I don't mind telling you I was more than concerned last August about the whole situation because the good news was we had two really good senior players, bad news was we really had no known quantity behind them.

But you look at guys like Boone Myers and Ike Boettger, who are both guys that red-shirted. They've been here now, work out with the 2s, and I'm not comparing them to Gallery at all, but I think back when we threw Gallery in there in 2000, probably about the fifth, sixth game, whatever it was, we were over at Indiana, it was his first week playing tackle. He was a second-year player, and just the scramble drill that was for him to start out. Think about Steinbach, we threw him in there in '99 at Ohio State from tight end, and what a scramble

drill that was. These guys are further ahead down the road and they've got some of the same characteristics. Now whether or not their careers will pan out the same way, hard to say.

Then flip it over, I would argue Bozata is probably more physically ready to play than Louis was two years ago in 2012. Louis got knocked around a little bit, then he started knocking guys around the next two years, but I think Nathan is probably a little bit better suited to be playing right now, and Jaleel I think would be the same discussion. We feel good about what we've seen him do.

So the next step is those guys actually going and playing and practicing with consistency and playing. But the cupboard is not bare, we just have to bring those guys along, and it's going to be fun.

**Q. Boone is a guy that has the biggest shoes to fill at left tackle and he really hasn't played that much and he was a tight end in high school. It's kind of a -- watching him grow, but what exactly do you see in him that you like?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You know, it's funny, he was a really good player in high school. I'm not sure -- he wasn't recruited by any BCS teams, including us. I mean, he walked on here. So I was really appreciative of that. We probably saw more of him on the basketball court to make us think that he had a chance to become a good player.

But it's like anything with recruiting, whether a guy has a scholarship, he walks on, five-star or no stars, until you get them on campus and see how they operate and how they do things, you're kind of projecting, and he's been here two years now so I think we've gone beyond the projection part of it and we've seen how he works, we've seen how he competes, and he's got the requisite ability, all that stuff, so now it's just a matter of learning how to really play that position.

By no means do we want him to try to fill those shoes. He just needs to play well, and if he does that, he'll be doing his job real well. It's going to be a progressive state, but we're excited about him. A lot of good attributes.

**Q. You moved Marcel Joly and Derrick Mitchell to running back. Is that their idea, and what's going on there?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Marcel's idea it was, and



then Derrick, I can't remember what game it was, he was on the look team and we needed him to imitate -- one week it was the quarterback and he also did some running back stuff and he showed some good things back there. When we were going through our roster and going through the evaluation process back in January, it was one of the discussions we had, and we presented it to him, and he was really enthusiastic about it, and it's an area that we're an open book right now. Just real eager to see what he does back there.

**Q. Is Darian Cooper going to be available this spring to play?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Probably not this spring. It's going to be a process, and I think he's got still a significant road ahead of him. We'll probably know more in June, like where he's really at and if he can make it back. I'm sure hoping he can. He's a tremendous guy. He really embodies everything we're looking for. He's just got a great attitude and really enthusiastic, great team guy, so we're hoping we can get him back and get him up and running.

**Q. Are there any other guys out this spring?**

KIRK FERENTZ: A couple guys that had shoulder issues back in January that won't have contact. Henry Krieger Coble won't be cleared for contact. And then we've got one of our incoming players, Brett Waechter, who actually had surgery back in November, but he won't be practicing full speed.

**Q. Keegan Render has kind of shown up on your depth chart a redshirt freshman, a big kid. How has he shown skills along with his size?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, we're the few, the proud, the free up there right now, so it's basically you could draw names out of a hat. We'll know more, but to that point, Keegan did a lot of nice things last year. We really liked what he did. How it's all going to shake out, we'll know more here in 15 days, but he's certainly one of the guys in contention and he's going to get a lot of work this spring so we'll learn a lot more about all the first-year guys as the spring goes on.

**Q. You talked about Louis a couple years ago when he was getting kicked around, back at a time when your defensive line was questionable, through that whole season, but**

**how do you feel now about the depth you've created there?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I feel a lot better now than I did in 2012, that spring. Not that we -- we still have work to do, but throughout that entire year, I mean, it's really what prompted us to throw Drew Ott in there mid-season. We didn't necessarily want to do that but we knew he was going to have to play the next year, so we just felt like it was smart to get him out there, same thing with Tevaun. So we're a little deeper now. But first things first; we've got to get our front-line guys playing the best they can, and then we've got to develop some more depth there, and certainly the end position is critical for us right now. We've got two young guys that I think are really capable of becoming good players, liked what we saw of them in December, but they've got a lot of work ahead, just like our tackles on offense.

**Q. You had to replace three terrific linebackers going into last year. You kind of threw Jewell in there, threw Bower in there, and now you've made them both pretty exclusively box linebackers. What did you see out of them to let you know that they could do the job and moving Bower from outside to weak side?**

KIRK FERENTZ: We just feel like this is our best combination to start with right now, but we obviously saw both play a lot and Josey from scrimmage situations. Ben is more of a special teams thing. I'd compare him to Miles Taylor. Both were true freshmen. We chose to play them on special teams, saw some really good things there, attitude and all that kind of stuff. We think the potential is there, and I wouldn't discount either of our seniors, both Cole and Travis. They're going into their fifth years. Travis did a lot of really good things for us last year. It was a big loss for us when he got injured against Minnesota.

I think any one of those five guys could end up starting. We'll give them a lot of work and a lot of reps, and then in Bo's case, we just felt like we know he can play out there and play pretty well. I think Ben is better suited to be an outside guy, so we thought, let's look at Bo on the inside position, see what he does, and all this stuff is kind of in pencil right now. We'll figure that out the next 15 days what our best combinations are going to be.

**Q. Going back to quarterback, where do you feel like Tyler is in his development?**



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**What do you have to do with him this spring?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, Tyler is like some of the other freshmen we've talked about already. Obviously we thought in recruiting we saw a lot of things we really liked and now we've had him here for a year and really like the way he does things. How fast can we move him forward and get him caught up? He's been in all the meetings, he's traveled to every game, so those guys are all together, but as far as like taking reps in our offense and having him make checks, audibles, all that stuff that quarterbacks have to do, it's easier to do it sitting in a chair than with everybody watching you and all that stuff in practice, and forget about game experience right now but just that stuff. That's the race he's running right now, but I have no reason to think that he won't do a good job. I really don't.

**Q. I know I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit, but is your plan to hope to redshirt both your quarterbacks coming in?**

KIRK FERENTZ: We'll cross that bridge when we get to it. I'd love to redshirt every freshman if we could, but sometimes it's not realistic, but in a perfect world that would be ideal.

**Q. What do you like about Ike at right tackle? He's another guy that came in at a different position.**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, he's played both, and it goes back to when we first saw him, he was a high school quarterback, and we asked him to catch a couple balls, like we did to AJ Edds, whatever year that would have been, and he did that really well. So we asked him, hey, would you come back next I think it was Monday or Tuesday, he showed up two days later with shoulder pads and asked him to block and he basically got splattered but the thing is he had never blocked anybody in his life but he tried to block. He had a really good attitude.

When he showed up here as a freshman, he kept growing, and he wasn't a bad tight end, but it just looked like he was going to outgrow it like some of the other guys I mentioned earlier. He's got a great attitude, really good work ethic. We've moved him around, guard and tackle, left and right and all that stuff, and he handles it pretty adeptly, but like the quarterback discussion earlier, he really hasn't done it under the gun as much. But he ran out there in the Ball State game when Brandon came out and held his own, did a nice job, did some good things.

We're young, he's inexperienced, and I'd say the same thing about Boone. I wouldn't discount Cole Croston, either. You mentioned the seniors at linebacker. But now it's a matter of what can they do, how fast can they run the race and get to the level they have to get to for us to play successfully.

**Q. You talked in January about doing maybe a little more research with other teams and traveling, checking out the offense and defense type stuff. Did you do more, and where did that go?**

KIRK FERENTZ: We did, and it's probably been about four weeks, I guess, something like that. We went to several schools. I think we probably hit about five different universities, and it was really good. It was really good, and I can't thank the people that have allowed us to come see them. They've been great. It's just food for thought, watch people operate in a different way, not only Xs and Os but program-wise, recruiting-wise, all those types of things. I think it was healthy for us, and we'll make sure we're doing that on a periodic basis.

But we've had some really good sessions, and that's one of the reasons we start a little bit later than most people. I think it's really important after recruiting to -- and we're unlike some people, we have to go right to the wire in recruiting. Not that everybody else doesn't, but I think it's important we really go back and reassess what we did, go through it methodically and take some time to talk about where we want to go and do some research and things like that. I think it's been really healthy, and that'll be ongoing. We've got a lot of ground to discover still.

**Q. You shifted some roles on your staff. You had LeVar Woods go to tight end, you had Jim Reid, I assume now all linebackers, and Seth Wallace. What were some of the reasons for that, and do you have GAs that will kind of move to what LeVar was doing?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, the main thing is we got out of balance a little bit in probably the -- it all originated kind of through Norm's health issues. We had to compensate a little bit when he was a little bit limited. You know, we've all done a lot of thinking about things, and that was just one of the things that came across my mind as you're

reflecting on things throughout January, just felt it was in our best interest maybe to shift some things around, balance back up a little bit, in that regard, and I think we've got everybody in the right spots right now. I really feel good about that.

And on an individual basis, you know, LeVar is all the things that I thought he was when we hired him. It's kind of like recruiting; you never know until you get a guy in there. But I think it's going to be good for his career, too, to be on the other side of the ball and have a chance to see things that's more learning and all that, and I know it's going to be good, and that's a really prominent position for us in our offense. It might not be in other places, but we'll play three of those guys on the field frequently. So just felt like they needed full-time attention from a full-time staff member, and I think it's going to be a really productive thing for everybody.

**Q. The running game coordinator, was that something you've been thinking about for a while, and why do you think the timing is right now?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I just felt like that was part of the staff alignment, thought it was a good thing, and I just thought it was the best thing to do for our program at this point.

**Q. Ike, when you threw balls to him, but would have been at your campus junior year maybe?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, it was before his senior year, correct, would be whatever that would be. My depth perception is not so good.

**Q. Austin Blythe, he's back at center, though?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, yeah. Austin has been a very good player regardless, and just one of those things, it's like we're talking about players, you learn about things, players in practice, but until they get in the game, you never know, and Tommy Gaul, when he jumped in there not only played well but just kind of stabilized our whole group a little bit. Sometimes you never know how those moves are going to work out, that's why we kept Austin at guard. Austin was our best center start to finish. I can't say enough about the job Tommy Gaul did. I think that's one of the great stories we've had here in 16 years, a fifth-year senior, first of all, that he stuck around for his fifth year, but he played wonderfully. He really did a great job.

And so it helped stabilize us, and you never know how things are going to work until it actually happens, but Austin will be back there, and that's where he'll stay.

**Q. You've got four running backs who have significant experience last year to a couple years prior that. Do you look at Canzeri right now as the starter, or how is that rotation looking?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You know, in my mind and in all our minds right now, I think he and LeShun are kind of co-starters. That's how I'd phrase it. They're two different style of runners. Kind of the same in that both of them were injured last year for a majority of the year; we had Jordan do some good things the bowl game certainly, and he had a pretty good month, which was really, I think, helpful for him. But outside of that he never was really right during the year for any prolonged period of time, and then obviously LeShun had surgery I think coming out of that second bye week.

So it was just one of those deals. But both those guys did a good job in December, and I think they're going to have to play well, and I'm confident they will.

Akrum, we've all had a chance to see him. He's got some real assets, some things that he does well, but there's also a growth process he's got to go through both physically and then just in terms of responsibility, taking better care of the football. It's going to be a big thing for him, but that's not something uncommon to young players, especially at the backfield position. They can be a little reckless with that football, and it's something he'll learn and will learn, but I'm not worried about it, other than we've just got to get them there.

**Q. What else needs to happen at wide receiver?**

KIRK FERENTZ: You know, basically a couple thoughts on that one. Jake Hillyer to me is a guy that we probably don't talk enough about. He's done a lot of really good things and very quietly I think has improved with each phase of the way. I always go back to the bowl game two years ago. It's ironic, the knock on Jake is he's not the most athletic guy we've got, yet he's made the most plays against the most athletic team we played in 2013, maybe with the exception of Michigan State. They're pretty good, too, you

know, on defense. But LSU had a pretty athletic group back there and he's the guy making plays. I think that card gets a little bit played -- like coaches, we get blind to reality sometimes. And then Matt Vandenberg has done a lot of good things. He's kind of like the running backs; we've got to keep him healthy and keep him in there.

So that's the starting group, and then the rest of the guys, Andrew Stone, Riley McCarron, we've got a bunch of guys we're going to move, Jonathan Parker, working him out there and see what he does. We'll just see how that group comes. We've got Andre Harris coming up who we think has a chance. Need young guys to develop.

**Q. Five guys that saw action at the running back position. This year do you want to cut that down? Do you want a starter and a co-starter?**

KIRK FERENTZ: We'll see how it plays out. We'll just see how it plays out, and if -- just the three guys that have been out there a lot, I say a lot, it's probably not the right way to phrase it, but the guys we know the most about at this point, if we can move them along, which I have no reason to think that we can't, I think all three of them will play well. How we break it up we'll see, but it's conceivable they could all have a role for us, and experience tells you we need backs. We need more than one.

**Q. How about Chris Daniels, and does he have a shot to be in the rotation?**

KIRK FERENTZ: We'll see. He's been a really impressive guy. James is a really good young guy and got a great attitude, really has done a nice job so far. But his head will really be spinning today. That's one thing I will predict, and I will be right on that one prediction. I'll stop there.

**Q. You've got three fullbacks who have starting experience. Do you anticipate keeping John Kenny there?**

KIRK FERENTZ: I think we will because Macon and Adam are both seniors. I know what you're saying there, and if we have to out of necessity potentially move him, but he did a lot of good things last year on the fly, and I would compare him to where those other two guys were two springs ago when we moved them there. It was kind of a learning process, and I think he's going through that. I think he's got really good potential, and that's an important position for us, also. So knowing that Adam and Macon are going

to graduate, I think in a perfect world we'd like to keep him there and just keep him on the learning curve.

**Q. You said in January you needed to spend more time building. How is that going the last two months? Do you feel more energized than you did on January 16th when we last talked?**

KIRK FERENTZ: Yeah, I mean, I spoke at a banquet the Friday after the game in Des Moines, actually it was the Variety Club. I told them I was glad to be there. People were thanking me for showing up and all that stuff. So you think about a week ago, okay, I got run over on the sideline and our team got it's tail kicked. I said that was a much better Friday night than the one I had had the week before. Losing is not much fun. The way we played wasn't much fun. There was nothing really good that came out of that whole experience quite frankly other than we all got back safely. But it's like anything else, you go through things, you lose a ballgame or hit a tough stretch, you analyze it, you try to work intelligently for it, and that's where our focus really has been. We moped a little bit afterwards and all that stuff, but we're focused on moving forwards right now. I think we've got a really good staff. The staff is in place, and we've gone through some transition certainly after 13 years. I think we've got everybody in the right seats right now, moved into a beautiful new facility, we've got a great group of guys that have been working hard, and we're anxious to get on the field. It's a new season. We've got a good opportunity in front of us, we've got a lot of challenges, as well, and what else can you ask for, so yeah, I feel really good about things. I think all of us are ready to get back out on the field and see what we can do with this opportunity. We've got a lot of work to do, but that's the fun of it.

**Q. A lot of coaches in your position, in the interest of whether it's self-preservation or just in front of the public would fire a couple of coaches. You chose not to. Why did you decide to stick with guys like Greg Davis?**

KIRK FERENTZ: It's no different than the discussion we had earlier on the quarterback situation. To that point, I think that became a trend. I want to quote 1983. I've got to go back and look in my book, but that's the first time I really



recall people having to walk the plank. If somebody is not doing their job, if somebody is not a good fit, whatever, then like I'm not here to judge anybody else, but that's what I look at. I think we've got good people in our organization, I think we've got excellent teachers. I think we coached really well in 2013 quite frankly, so last year I told you, nobody is happy about it. We left way too many opportunities out there, but I firmly believe we've got the right people here. We've got good people, and we just have to do a better job, and that's going to be our challenge right now. If I didn't have that confidence, we would have made changes, but that's not how I felt, and certainly I gave it a lot of thought. That's my job, that's my responsibility. But I feel great about the folks that are here, and I think we have every opportunity to have a successful season this year and that's really what we're working towards now.

**Q. If you look at the secondary, you have three returning starters, I think only one opening at strong safety. Is that Miles Taylor right now?**

KIRK FERENTZ: He's the name on the depth chart just because it's spring ball, and I explained that to our guys that depth charts, whether it be spring or August, it's a starting point. It's like the linebacker spot, really all of our spots that are on the roster right now, they're open for competition. It might end up being Anthony Gair, could be Brandon Snyder, could be somebody else, we'll try to get the best two safeties on the field and we'll do that great thing about this time of year. Everybody has got opportunity. One thing for sure, we've never had too many good players. Like maybe we do at fullback right now; I hope we do. In November I hope we're saying that, and maybe last year at quarterback, but that doesn't happen very often. Yeah, it's wide open, and that's the fun part about this time of year. We'll have a chance to really evaluate and see how guys respond.

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