

August 7, 2009



An interview with:

COACH KIRK FERENTZ

COACH FERENTZ: I think we're all set to go. Start off by welcoming everybody. Good to see you. Certainly we're eager to get started. It was good to get out on the field this morning. We got one under our belts. Hopefully the weather is going to clear. Looks like it's going to. We'll have a good press day, move on from there.

I wanted to start off first of all by recognizing Larry Station being honored by the Collegiate Hall of Fame. What great recognition, great achievement. I think everybody familiar with our program knows what a great football player Larry was during his career, more importantly what a great human being he is. It's really nice to see him recognized, his efforts and his career recognized in such a great way. Just very, very happy for him.

A couple announcements real quickly. Roster-wise, for us, first thing is Jayme Murphy, who has had some injury problems throughout his career, is going to continue on. He's on scholarship. He's been one of our most dynamic special teams players that I think we've had certainly in our decade here. Just a tremendous young guy. Great work ethic, great attitude.

Jayme is going to play this year. It may be in a limited capacity. We're going to try to be protective of his well-being for obvious reasons. He's going to serve as one of our seniors this year. He's a fourth-year player. The way I look at it, it's just going to be a great addition to our senior class. We're very happy for Jayme.

Probably the only roster thing of note right now, Stephane N'goumou will not be joining the team. Stephane is going to end up either going to a junior college or a prep school, we're not sure

which right now. So we certainly wish him the best, and sorry he can't join us as we get started here.

Probably the only other thing really significant, Chad Geary will not be ready to go at the start of this season. On the medical front, he's coming off an ACL repair from the spring. The other guy that would be touch-and-go, it would take some luck, but Julian Vandervelde. He could be ready. We'll see how that progresses as we go along the next couple weeks. I think realistically we may miss a game or two with him.

You know, just looking backwards we had a strong finish to the year last year. Made it an enjoyable year for us. Now our sights back in January shifted towards this season. Certainly we're excited to get going. This is a real enjoyable time of year for us as coaches and for players. It's strictly football for two weeks. It's a big, big part of our developmental stage. We're excited to get started here and get this phase going.

A little bit like last year, we've got a team that's fairly youthful if you look at it from a senior class, our senior class is about the same size as about a year ago, but yet we've got a fair amount of experience also. I think also we got a lot of good healthy competition going on here, curious to see what the next 20 workouts bring from that standpoint.

I think the key for our football team is improvement. This is an opportunity for us to grow a little bit. We're going to have to be ready in September. I think our losses are pretty obvious on defense, with Matt and Mitch up inside, two guys that were four-year starters. Fletcher was a one-year player, but played really well. Bradley had a great senior year. We've lost some pretty good players there.

On the offensive side, Rob Bruggeman, Seth Olsen, two guys up front that did a great job. Brandon Meyer who came on early had a nice career for us, and obviously Shonn Greene, who

had a great, great senior year as well.

Those are certainly losses for us. Then right along with that, Andy Brodell did a great job as a return guy. We've got to right now try to find a way to fill in for that production that we lost, that production is significant, certainly. I think maybe more important than that is the leadership that those guys all provided for us, every one of those guys. The seniors that didn't play a lot, they gave us great leadership, too. I think that's paramount in our thinking right now. Eager to see how that develops.

I think for us to have success, as I mentioned in Chicago a week ago, we need to have great stories. If you look at us traditionally, that's been the deal. Certainly last year Shonn Greene's story is well-documented. Maybe right there behind it is Bradley Fletcher, a guy that started four or five games going into his senior year, ended up being the guy drafted right after Shonn. Had a great career. Rob Bruggeman had a fantastic career also as a one-year player, played as well at center as anybody we've had in the last decade. Those three guys are great examples. Pat Angerer at this point last year was a second team player, Stanzi was a second team player. Thought they came on and played well. Certainly we're counting on them to play well again this year and assume the leadership role. I think we've already seen that.

On the topic of stories I'll deviate one second. I think one guy that's kind of flown under the radar a little bit, I've mentioned this at a couple banquets, we had a guy, Vernon Jackson, recruited after the Capital One Bowl, after the 2005 Capital One Bowl. Young guy came in here from Orlando. One of the toughest things any player has to deal with is a career-ending injury. Vernon ended up taking a medical redshirt. His career ended.

The rest of the story, Vernon graduated last May as a dean's list student, was admitted to law school, is going to attend law school at Jacksonville. You know, to me that's as great a success story as Shonn Greene or the other guys that were a little bit more notable on the field. It's just part of college athletics, not just in football, but all in smart sports. Sometimes young people have their dreams not come to realization. I think it says a lot about that young man, says a lot about the support network on campus here the way people supported Vernon in his pursuits. We certainly wish him every bit of luck. I know he'll do a great job in the years ahead.

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We're anxious to get going. Certainly we need to get ready. If you just look at any portion of our schedule, road games, what have you, but I think if you just look at the September portion of our schedule, you know, enough said right there. We've got four teams that are going to be certainly ready to play us. We're going to have to be ready to go right from the start. That's the work that's ahead right now.

So we're here to get going. The last thing I'll just make note of, Phil probably already mentioned this, but a week from tomorrow we will have an open practice here in the stadium. I think it's a little bit significant. It's Kids' Day, so we'll do autographs afterwards for a half hour. But also significant, it will be the first time for the general public to see this year's football team since we couldn't have the spring game. Also get a look at the turf and just familiarize themselves with Kinnick.

Certainly want to extend an invitation out to everybody that's interested to come on out and watch the team that day. Hopefully we'll have a good practice that day, as well.

With that, I'll just throw it out for questions.

Q. Coach, a few years ago you graduated a couple linemen, but had the linebackers back. Talk about the situation this year with Jeremiah, how much are they going to compensate for the loss of King and Kroul?

COACH FERENTZ: I think it's helpful we have a veteran linebacking group behind those guys. Really it's almost that way our entire two deep. We feel good about the guys playing behind the line. I think the other thing, tying along with that, with Mitch and Matt graduating, I can't say enough about what they did on the field. But also, as you'd imagine, four-year players, these guys were great program guys, served as outstanding leaders for us. That's a void certainly.

I just kind of look at it, a year ago we came with two new defensive ends, Brian and Ken had graduated the year before. Those two guys are both on NFL teams now. They played well. The way I'm looking at it right now, we've got Ballard, we've got Clayborn out there that have played well. They're also excellent leaders. We've seen them grow and emerge over the past 12 months.

You know, the other guy I'd mention is Broderick Binns. We've got some guys I think that

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are ready to go. We're confident the young guys playing inside are going to do a good job. You know, it's a little bit like the runningback situation, I think it's fair to say we'll do it by committee. It's going to take more guys to fill King and Kroul's shoes, just like it's going to take more than one guy to fill Shonn Greene's shoes.

The combination of people stepping in, group of people stepping in for those individuals, and then, as Andrew said, the strength we have with the linebackers, their experience. We think we'll have a chance to be okay. But we got work to do.

Q. Could you talk a little bit about your cornerbacks, Spievey comes back, seems to be undoubtedly number one, but looks like you have a pretty good competition.

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, it's one of the positions I was referring to when I talked about the competition. And right now certainly I think Jordan Bernstine would come out number one if we were playing tomorrow. But there is good competition right now. We think that Prater can really get after him a little bit, and Lowe will be in the competition. Then Greg Castillo redshirted last year. He had a nice spring. So we're all curious to see where he's at, how he's improved.

I think at the end of the day, any one of those guys could win the job. Amari shouldn't be beat out. If he does, that's shame on him there. But I think we've got pretty good competition. We've got nice potential with that group. It's a good young group right now. They all work hard, have a good attitude.

We're all curious I think as a coaching staff to see what these next 20, 25 practices brings in terms of who's going to emerge. One thing about pre-season camp, when you go that long in a concentrated period, the picture -- things have a way of telling themselves, they really do. That's part of the fun of this time of year.

Q. Last year you had the competition between Stanzi and Christensen going in. This year Ricky, obviously the number one established. But you've got some youth behind him. Two redshirt freshmen as your primary backups right now.

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we're probably carrying the least amount of quarterbacks as anybody in the nation, I probably would imagine, if you exclude NFL teams. We're probably one of the groups. We don't have a senior in the group

with Rick being the point person. James and John were both guys we thought did a lot of nice things in the fall last year. They spent a lot of time imitating opponents. It's hard to gauge things totally, but they both had good springs.

We feel good about both those guys. It's going to be fun for us to watch how they compete also. You know, either one of them are going to be a play away from being in there and playing. We need to get both those guys ready to play on Saturdays, ready to play winning football, not just play for us. That's one of the things that's really paramount for us over the next 25 days, getting those guys game ready. We're anxious to see how that all shakes out.

Q. You touched on the experience, how that played into being ranked in the pre-season. Is that one of the biggest story lines you think entering this season, all the experience? Obviously the losses like every year, but 26 returning players with starting experience, then 16 returning starters.

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, you know, I don't know, I'm not great on knows numbers. I don't always look all those things up. This team kind of feels like the team we had a year ago. I know our seniors in terms of numbers are about the same. Returning, starting experience. I think we had a significant amount last year. We just hadn't had a lot of success or the kind of success we wanted.

I think if you look back, our last -- you know, all season last year, we were competitive. We didn't quite get it done the way we wanted to in certain ballgames. I think we've made progress. But all that being said, really we're starting over again.

I told our team, I mean, we came off a January Bowl after the 2005 season, I guess we'd gone to four straight, and we really didn't play very well in 2006. That year we came off a disappointing loss that kept us out of a Bowl game. We were able to overcome that. So really what's important right now is what we choose to do here in the next couple months.

But we're excited about the amount of experience that we have. But all that being said, we're pretty inexperienced at some critical positions right now, too. And that's going to be interesting to see how we can come along at those spots.

Q. Does going into a season ranked put any more pressure on you?

COACH FERENTZ: I don't think so. I mean, pre-season rankings are a little bit like recruiting rankings. They really -- unless you're talking about eight or 10 teams in the country that will probably still be there 10 years from now, I don't think it really matters too much. If we let it affect us, it will affect us. But really it doesn't matter till we get to January.

I'll throw this in. In November, when you get into November, rankings are significant, you have something tangible to base them on instead of projections. I'll start paying attention in November. I just hope we are there then. I'd rather be there in January.

Q. Just wondering if Jewel went this morning? Is he going to be limited at all?

COACH FERENTZ: Jewel Hampton? Yeah, Jewel tweaked his knee back in June. Made mention of that back in Chicago. Nothing really new to report. He's had a good month of July. Now we're into August. He played today, practiced today. And, he seems to be doing well. So attitude's good. Looks good out there.

Q. Do you get a sense for the first time since maybe 2006 there's quite a bit of expectation that goes along with this team? What are your thoughts on that, that you have high expectations?

COACH FERENTZ: Yes again, I'm not the best guy for tracking that stuff. But I think, if I remember correctly, we were one of the teams to talk about in the Chicago meetings in 2006. You guys remember better than I do probably. But we all know how that one turned out.

So, I guess I'm not really too worried about what the talk is right now. We need to go out and play well. We need to prepare for this season. We need to play well. That's the most important thing. We'll have that opportunity.

For whatever reason, second half of that year, we let it get away from us. That's not the idea. So hopefully we've learned from that one.

Q. Fullbacks caught five passes last year, but never rushed. Is that kind of a first for you?

COACH FERENTZ: We're going to try to get them at least six balls this year. That's one of our team goals this year. We're lucky, nobody's

been protesting or making too much of a fuss. It is interesting. I think our last three fullbacks have all been converted linebackers, so that might tell you right there what's going on. Then we got Wade Leppert, this is a true story, I think I mentioned it last year, he literally was begging us to get on our team his senior year in high school. I still got the letter somewhere. I'm glad he was persistent because he's a good football player.

But the way we do things, if they get the ball, they get the ball. But it's not a big part of our design.

Q. There's a certain amount of talk about Bryan Bulaga, the NFL, going out early. I know he's a pretty sound guy, knows he's got a lot ahead of him. How are you handling that? What can you do basically?

COACH FERENTZ: Two things. We talked in the out of season about it. The comparison I would make, although the difference is, Robert (Gallery) was actually in his fourth year, where Bryan is in his third. Bryan is an unusual guy. There aren't many guys that have come on this campus and played well at true freshmen in the offensive line. That's uncommon. It's a real credit to Bryan. And he did it despite an injury that took him off the field three or four weeks that first year. So I think that makes it even that much more impressive.

But, you know, I guess the way I'm looking at it, he may have a decision. We'll see. It's really putting the horse in front of the cart. He may have a decision to make in the out of season. That's the time to really address it. It's like anything else, I'm going to support whatever is best for any of our players and their futures. Hopefully the family will be involved.

It's really as simple as looking at the facts as you know them. There's a lot of projection when you talk about the draft if you're trying to project in December what's going to happen. April, there's a lot of projection. But he may have a choice to make. I think in his case, he had a choice of probably being, I'm just guessing, a 20 to 30 pick that year, or staying in, moving up into a top five spot. There are a lot of financial benefits if you're one of the top five guys. There's a real trend, NFL people seem to like taking good, solid linemen in those top five spots, too.

Again, we're way down the road from that. You know, he's also got a redshirt year available,

too, so we could even keep that in our pocket. Maybe I'll promise I'll redshirt him next year and he can come back for a fifth year, one of those deals.

Q. You got a pretty daunting road schedule in the Big-10. How do you prepare for that?

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, we do. We have four tough games in the Big-10, certainly our first trip is on the road to Ames. Wherever we play that game, it's going to be a tough ballgame.

Talking about rankings, are we going to have a good team, all that, it's really conceivable we have a better team than last year and have a record that doesn't indicate that, 'cause winning on the road is tougher, there's no question about that. I think the statistics prove that out. Yet teams have done a good job on the road in the past. There's documented evidence of that. You just look at the NFL the last couple years, Pittsburgh did a pretty fair job on the road. Nobody had a better run than the New York Giants, going to the Super Bowl. I think Pat Flaherty stopped by practice and talked to our team about that one time. They called their playoff game, including the Super Bowl, games they lost to those opponents, they had to beat them on their turf or away from Giants Stadium in the case of the Patriot game.

If you're going to be a good team, you're going to have to handle the road. We know every one of those environments will be tough. You factor in two night games on top of it, makes the difficulty a little bit more -- incline's a little higher. We're just going to have to be ready for it. Gets down to details, really having a great focus.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH FERENTZ: Well, this is where we want to be. That's got nothing to do with football. Just in general this is where we want to be. The guys have done a great job. We didn't have a perfect year last year, but I think we made improvement in every area. That's the whole objective. I mean, all those things are important to us, what we do off the field, what we do in the classroom, as well as on the football field. Our football field performance is probably a good analogy that way. We didn't have a perfect season, but, I tell you, we got great effort from our players, and we were awfully close when we didn't come on the right side.

The reasons we failed, they're all traceable, they're explainable, correctable. But the attitude was there and people were really trying to

do things right. And I think we've had a good year in all records that way. Perfect, no, but a good year. If your team's doing that, it's a little bit easier to feel good about things.

It's hard work to get a degree at a school like Iowa. It hard work to be a good citizen, be a good football player. It's hard work. But that's how it's supposed to be. We're going to make mistakes. I think so far so good. We just got to build on that right now.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH FERENTZ: We feel good about Rick and his development. Last year he was just trying to play, trying to compete for a job, just trying to play. That's true of all young players. Quarterbacks are a little bit more visible. But, they're just trying to do their job. You know, that's a lot to ask a guy the first time he's on the field. I think now he's ready to do more than that. He started that back in January. He's accepted a leadership role. I think he's embraced it. He's really doing a nice job there.

The exciting part is he can be a lot better as a football player. That's got us excited. I think he will because his attitude is outstanding. How did those other two guys come along? This next month, it's really critical. Again, we're not just trying to get guys ready to play; they need to be ready to play winning football. If Rick has a broken shoelace, nobody really cares who is in, somebody's got to get the job done. The good news there, we're excited about both Wienke and Vandenberg. We think they both have a lot of the traits that we think are important for quarterbacks, like the way they handle themselves. The thing now is we just got to try to speed the clock up and get them ready to go.

Q. A lot of career starts returning on the offensive line. How important is it to develop some depth at that position over the next month?

COACH FERENTZ: It's going to be very important. Younger players, is that what you're talking about?

Q. Yes.

COACH FERENTZ: Graduating five seniors up front. We've got some work to do 'cause the same thing, when those guys walk out, somebody has to be ready to go, just like Klug has

to be ready in the defensive tackle spot. Offensive line it takes a little bit longer certainly. We have to get our frontline settled first of all, that's most important right now. We're trying hard. We've been doing that for a while, trying to move or younger players, guys like Gettis, Zusevics, who have been here a couple years. Both have had good springs. They may or may not show up on the radar this fall. I don't know if they will. Even if they're not out playing on Saturdays, they need to be getting ready to go so they can jump in there and do a great job when their time comes. It's going to come for both. I just like the way they're developing. It's that way with all the guys behind the scenes right now.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH FERENTZ: I think we've had opportunity. You know, all we got to do is look back to last January, that group that was playing in Tampa. They're playing pretty well. That was fun to watch that tape. You know, that's where the bar is right now. I'm not saying they're better than the 2002 group. They were both good. But those guys set a pretty high bar. For us to get there, we've got some work to do. But we've got guys I think that are very capable of playing. It's just a matter of getting that work done in the next month. You know, the line takes a while to develop. But we're excited about the potential. Now we got to get it done.

Q. Talk about the guys you need to fill in up front defensively, talk about the guys in the secondary, the linebacking group, like Angerer, Greenwood, who have sort of anchored that defense, and now are very important?

COACH FERENTZ: You know, you like to be strong up the middle. We were that last year. You know, so that inside position right now with Karl Klug, got Cody Hundertmark, Mike Daniels had a good spring. Travis Meade jumped in there and did some good things. So we've got a group of guys in there working that we're excited about right now.

But on the outside, again, we've got two veterans with Adrian and Christian. They're going to set the tempo. Then up the middle, Pat Angerer and Brett Greenwood have played very well for us. Brett was clearly a much better player last year after getting his feet wet two years ago. He played at a higher rate. We're hoping to see that same type of progress with Tyler Sash. I think he should

be a lot more confident and decisive out there with his play. We've got a good nucleus.

Pat Angerer I think is one of great stories on our team last year. I mentioned he was number two coming in. I don't think many linebackers played much better. There are some good linebackers in our conference. But Pat did an awful lot for our football team in a lot of different ways. He's a real smart football player besides being competitive.

So you know, we've got some guys that we're really excited about. We're counting on those guys to really give us some leadership.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH FERENTZ: Well, I mean, the three things right now, we've got to figure out our runningback equation, the offensive line equation. Just curious to see how it unravels here. Certainly the defensive tackles. I mean, we feel good about all those positions. But seeing is believing. So we've got to be able to see it out there.

Q. Could you talk about how far Dace Richardson had to come in the last two years to have a chance to play this fall?

COACH FERENTZ: Dace is one of the good stories I mentioned. We've got five seniors. Potentially Dace would have another year if it works out. Hope we get that option. You know, it's a great story in that, you know, probably about last late September, early October, I really was starting to doubt it was going to happen for him. The procedure he had is similar to what Mike had, except Dace is a much bigger human being obviously. Those kind of recoveries are a little bit more challenges.

To his credit, he never gave up on it. To his teammates' credit, he got a lot of encouragement from a lot of people, not just our medical staff, which did a great job, trainers. When players are injured, I talked about Vernon earlier, I don't think any of us can truly appreciate, I don't spend enough time thinking about all the time that goes into the rehab process, the surgery itself, the mental turmoil that injuries cause. There's a lot going on. So for a guy to work through an injury, got an awful lot of respect for any player that does that.

Dace has done a great, great job. He's got a lot of support, but he's the guy that's made it happen. He had a good spring, and was out there

working today. We're counting on him to have a great year. We've got to be smart about what we do with him in practice, especially this time of year. I'm optimistic right now that he's going to have an excellent year and we'll worry about next year next year.

Q. (Question regarding wide receivers.)

COACH FERENTZ: That's another position we talked about. I'm curious about our receivers, how that unravels, the next 20, 25 practices. You know, to me it's a positive right now. Derrell (Johnson-Koulinos) has played well for us in the past. We expect him to play well in the future. The fact that Marvin played well in the spring is exciting. He's a guy that I think has a lot of upside, too, because last year when he moved to receiver, he didn't get a lot of the fundamental work you have to have like you do get in spring practice or in camp. So we're really excited to see where he'll be in 20 practices.

But all that being said, nothing's changed with him. He's a good football player. I think it's going to be some interesting competition out there. We're excited to see how that all goes. It's like everything else, it's in the player's hand. We evaluate everything. Everything they do gets evaluated on the field, off the field. We're looking for the guys that we think can give us the best chance to get it done on Saturdays. At the end of the day, that's what we're looking for.

Q. August, September, last year, all the talk was about the quarterback situation. How good is it this year there's a clear cut No. 1?

COACH FERENTZ: I didn't mind last year. I thought we had good competition. We had a guy that started, played well for us. When you have those situations, that's usually a healthy thing. You know, I think right now there is probably a little bigger gap than there was a year ago. But we have a good feel for what Rick is going to do for us. Now we need to get the other guys moving along and just pushing their experience bar up so we can get them ready to play, too. It's always nice to have guys that are ready to step in and go.

Q. Amari, can you talk about his ceiling, how good he can be?

COACH FERENTZ: Amari (Spievey) is another one of those great stories. I left him out probably because he's got two more years. He came here as a true freshman and we projected him as a defensive player. He was probably a

better running back in high school than anything else. We thought he had a good chance to be a good corner. He was really lost basically in every way when he got here. I don't mean that in a bad way. But he was a long way from home. It was a tough adjustment for him I think on every front. He let his schoolwork go a little bit. Again, to his credit, not unlike Shonn Greene, he did the hard work he had to do to get back.

The other thing that happened when he was at Iowa Central, he really found himself as a football player. I know he did a great job for them up there as a defensive back. Also did a good job as a return specialist. Clearly just a different person when he got here last year on all fronts. He was a lot more engaged. I think he was comfortable with being away from home, which he wasn't that first year. Just seemed totally at ease in all regards. He's done a nice job in the classroom. He's obviously done a very nice job on the football field. He's got a great personality, great demeanor.

I think we all caught a glimpse of maybe the kind of ability he had last year. He played pretty well for us. The interception return in the last regular season game was pretty impressive. So we're just really thrilled to have him back on the team and really proud of the way he's taken care of things.

Q. On the defensive tackle front, would you like to see maybe one or two of those guys emerge as the guys at that spot or is it possibly to have guys rotate?

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not really worried about that. We'll play guys however things shake out. One of the good things that happened, I made this comment at the end of spring. Last spring, when we were thin on numbers, somebody broke their helmet or whatever, and Clayborn and Ballard both jumped inside without being asked. They just jumped down in there and started playing. That's, A, the kind of attitude you want to see, and B, they didn't look too bad in there.

We've got some options. I think with the group, again, I mentioned Broderick (Binns). He might be in my mind one of our most improved players on the team. That came to light in the bye week. We didn't block him during our bye week last year, and we haven't blocked him since very consistently in practice. We've got some flexibility right now. But, again, I'm enthused about that

group. Mike Daniels had a good spring. Karl Klug has made some plays for us in the past. I don't know if those guys are ready to play 70, 75 snaps a game like King and Kroul. You could write it down they were going to go out there and do that for you. We'll get creative if we have to. We feel we have enough to get it done with.

Q. You mentioned a couple of backup players, Spievey, Angerer, Stanzi who rose to the occasion and played well last year. Who are a couple of players you have a hunch might work themselves into that starting lineup, be key contributors this year?

COACH FERENTZ: You know, time will tell. I guess that's my attitude. I'd rather let it happen. I mentioned Binns, which I probably said more about him than I should. I'd bring him up only because he really started November right on through. He's really played well. We've got two pretty good ends right now that are playing well. But otherwise he'd be a starter for us. I'm not really going out on a limb there.

I think we're going to have some good stories. We're all anxious to see who they're gonna be, what unfolds.

Q. Seems like it's been a while since there's been a game breaker on the kick return team.

COACH FERENTZ: About eight years, right?

Q. Right now in the depth chart, looks like you have a starting running back and a couple other guys. Who are you looking at for kick return? Do you think you see someone on the roster that could be a huge asset on the return team?

COACH FERENTZ: I'm not being smart, but we're literally going to try everybody, everybody we have. The other part, just as important as the punt return, we've really been lucky with Andy Brodell. He did a fantastic job as a punt returner for us. We had (Ed) Hinkle before that. Two guys made great decisions, really got a lot of yards for us, made big plays, kind of in a sneaky way, if you will. Both those positions are really important to us right now.

I mentioned we talk about positions of interest, those might be as big as anything we have. The punt return standpoint because we've been so good, we don't want to lose any ground there. Then the kick return on a different chapter.

We just really have not been very consistent. I think I'm right in saying I think it was 2002 we were pretty good then. C.J. Jones did a pretty good job. Maybe we've had a couple returns since then. It's not a very long highlight reel.

We need to get that going, we really do. We're open to anybody. So if there's anybody on our roster, if we can find somebody, we're going to get them in there. It's a tough thing to practice live. I remember whatever year, like 1987, Quinn Early, 10 days before our first game, got tackled on a kickoff return drill, got his shoulder knocked out. That didn't help us too much for that year. It's one of those things you've got to be careful on.

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH FERENTZ: Yeah, if we're talking about potential for a great story, another one, I'll go out on a limb there with Tony (Moeaki). I think he's got a chance to have a good year. I say that in jest. Tony has just had so much hard luck during the course of his career. He was really having a great camp last year, and then just making a cut, had that problem with his foot. So he's had a lot of hard luck. If there's justice at all which sometimes there is, hopefully he'll go through this season totally unscathed.

With Tony our fans haven't had a chance to see the same guy we've seen. He's an excellent football player, couldn't be a better team leader or team member. It would be a great boost to our whole football team if he has the kind of year we think he's capable of. He's worked extremely hard. I know he's ready to go. He's very anxious.

That's one thing about injuries, too, when you're away from the game for a while, it really sharpens your awareness. I think he's ready to go, highly motivated. I just hope he has the opportunity to go out and do what we all think he can do.

Thank you.

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