

**February 3, 2014**



An Interview With:

## **GARY BARTA BOND SHYMANSKY**

GARY BARTA: Thanks, everybody, for being here. Before I let Bond take over the show, just a little bit of background to give you my perspective, and then I'm excited to introduce Bond.

First of all, from my perspective, I've been in the state now a combination of eight years now here and seven years while I was at Northern Iowa, and one of the things that I know during both of those stints is that volleyball is something that this state of Iowa thoroughly enjoys. There's a great interest in it. There's a strong culture, so that's certainly something that I've been aware of.

I mentioned in my statement that we sent out that the Big Ten is the best volleyball conference in the country. I know that's stating the obvious, but eight teams in the NCAA, and seven in the Sweet 16, and the only one that lost was defeated by another Big Ten school. So, clearly the most competitive conference in America.

We've had some success at Iowa in the '80s, not much since, a little bit in the '90s, but clearly this is something that we want to get fixed. And there's been a commitment by the department and by myself. We've been investing in facilities. You're sitting in the renovation of Carver, the locker rooms, the practice facility. Inside Carver we've created the curtain system for women's basketball, for volleyball, for some of our other Olympic sports.

We're ready to take the next step. We're ready to compete in that incredibly difficult Big Ten Conference.

With the search, Mary Curtis, who is here today and can answer questions you have about the search, she's our associate AD and oversees the sport of volleyball.

For those of you who have been here when I've talked about other searches, the process doesn't change much. I'm looking for someone who's very good at what they do. They've had proven success at the highest level because by the time you get to Iowa you need to have that experience in order to lead our program. It didn't have to be a head coach, although that was certainly something that we put great value on.

Looking for somebody who shared our values: Win, graduate and do it right, and that was an important piece of the puzzle.

We were looking -- in Bond's case, we found something that I often look for. I appreciate if I can find it, and that's someone who started this business at the high school level or at the small college level because then I know that they're passionate about the game more so than the fame that comes with getting to this level. Getting to this level is obviously something that ultimately they're striving for, but they love the game itself.

Now let's move on to our next head coach. Bond had all of those things. He and I had gotten to know each other a little bit over the years in conversations. I certainly knew what he had accomplished at Georgia Tech. I watched as he did that again, and repeated that success at Marquette.

I'm always looking for a coach who wants to be here, and clearly if you know Bond's background, and some of you do, and his family, they're very familiar with Iowa City, and it became clear in our conversations that he wanted to be here.

With that background and with great enthusiasm and excitement, again, I want to thank Mary and the search committee. There were a small group of people who spent time with several

candidates, and we ended up with a great result. Without further ado, our new head volleyball coach, Bond Shymansky.

**BOND SHYMANSKY:** Thanks, Gary. Definitely like to thank the search committee and thank you for putting that vision out there. Gary kept talking about it was a partnership to try to get the program to where it needs to be and build a champion. It wouldn't take just a new coach, and it wouldn't take just these great facilities and a great University, it would take great leadership inside the department to do it, and we certainly have that with Gary and also Mary Curtis, who did a great job through the course of the interview process and really trying to lay things out so I could understand them clearly.

I'm from Iowa City, and I know what that's all about, but what is it that I'm going to come see and do and feel when I come into this athletic department.

It's really just been phenomenal. The new athletic department building here connected to the arena is symbolic, I think, of the level of excellence that this department expects, that this University expects, and that the Hawkeye Nation expects, and that's what I want, too. We want to build a champion. We have a very specific goal, and the team will understand that, and that is to win, to graduate and to do it right. But we want to do it at the highest level, and the Big Ten affords us that opportunity like no other conference in the country.

We are super excited about that momentum coming into the program. I've already heard from a lot of great people that I kind of had maybe lost touch with over the years, but man, that Hawkeye Nation comes out strong. They found out I'm a Hawkeye again, and they got to me real quick. They're really excited.

I know that my whole family will increase the attendance by probably 18 for every match, so that's good, and they're all here. Both my wife and I are from here, and all of our family is still here, so it's great to have them on board.

But I know that the community wants to get behind all of Iowa athletics, and so the community will find a way to get behind volleyball. We want to give them something that they can be proud of, something they can be inspired by, something that can be a great representation for the best things in Iowa athletics and the best things in young women out there competing hard in athletics.

It's really been a great journey for me. I started as a ninth grade B-team coach at West High, so Gary talks about it was definitely paid for

peanuts, and I don't think my paycheck ever even covered my food and gas expense, but that's not why I was doing it. I did it because I loved the game and I loved coaching and teaching. I got to coach at City High as a varsity coach somewhere along the way. I went to Regina at some point in my schooling career. So I kind of got all the bases covered here locally, and I love them all.

I coached in my very first coaching job in college at another school across the state, so I got that part covered, too, and this whole journey in my life and in our family's life has led us all the way back here to Iowa, and that's pretty special.

**Q. Has this job always been in the back of your mind as you've risen up the ranks?**

**BOND SHYMANSKY:** Yes, it just has. There's something, and I tweeted the other night, "always have been, always will be a Hawkeye." That's just the way it is. You know, you grow up here, and it just becomes a part of who you are. It's part of your fabric.

I was sharing stories about all the different times that I've been part of athletics events here, whether I was 10 years old or 20 years old or whatever, and they're great memories. Don't tell any of my former professors, but I don't remember a whole lot of days in class, but I did go. I do remember a lot of athletic events. I came for wrestling, and when Vivian Stringer was coaching and they put 20,000-plus people in the arena and I'd never been to a women's basketball game. I was really young. But I just heard that it was happening, and you have to go do it, and you have to go be a part of it. Ever young at heart at that point, I got on my bicycle and I rode over here to the arena and I came in and stood on the mezzanine level and never saw a single shot. I couldn't see it. I was too small, but it didn't matter. I was part of that.

I remember rushing down on the field when Rob Houghtlin kicked that field goal against Michigan. Those are special memories. All of those things, calling out from the outfield fence at the baseball stadium and heckling the opponent or whatever. I don't know what encouraged me really to do that, but what I knew was that I was a fan of all things Hawkeye, and that I wanted to be a part of all things Hawkeye, and I felt that way.

Now I get to be on the inside of that, and I hope to really create that around our program and inside of our program, that people want to come be



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a part of that, too.

**Q. The state of high school volleyball in Iowa, you're obviously familiar with that. How strong is that, and how do you intend to keep those athletes at the University?**

BOND SHYMANSKY: Yeah, the volleyball talent in our state is awesome. It always has been. A lot of that is driven by every school, every town, they have a volleyball program.

So there are young gals out there getting after it. Whether they're in a farming community or one of the bigger cities, there's talent out there.

I've been trying for years to break into the borders, and when I was at Georgia Tech, Atlanta seems like an ocean away to a lot of these kids, and when I was at Marquette, it was only one state away, but that's still pretty far. I know where I'm at, I'm in Hawkeyeland, and it was hard for me to pull them out. I had a gal that was on the Marquette roster from Dubuque, and I had to work hard to get in there. They saw the success, that intrigued them, but it would always come back to the same thing: I'm a home-grown product. I want to stay and play here at home.

So, that's something that I know that we can take advantage of. This is still the Hawkeye State, and we're going to get out there and we're going to beat every bush and turn over every stone, and we are going to find the talent that's here.

It's not a warning, it's a promise, that we're going to go after those kids, and we're going to show them the best that Iowa volleyball is and can be, and we're going to ask them to buy into that vision. And the right kid with the right guts that has the right chip on their shoulder, they'll come be a part of it, and they'll start doing it now, not three years if we're winning more, five years from now if we get some shiny new thing. Mm-mm, it's right now, this is when we're starting it.

**Q. The fact that Iowa State and Northern Iowa are both having success, how does that impact your job? Does it make it easier, harder?**

BOND SHYMANSKY: You know, you have in-state rivals that have good volleyball programs. It helps just the profile of the sport. It means that kids all over the state are looking at the game and saying that's a great game to play. I think it helps us in terms of the ability to compete in and around our area and have great competition to go up against. I know the challenge and I know

the task of it. I have a ton of respect for those coaches at those institutions, but it doesn't mean that we're going to lay down and just kind of let them roll over us. We're going to go out there and we're going to get the same kids that they're after, and we're going to find a way to get it done.

**Q. How important is it to hit the recruiting trail right now?**

BOND SHYMANSKY: Tomorrow night. You know, my phone is blowing up in a great way, and I'm on it. My throat is just about gone, and it's not just today or yesterday or whatever. It was the minute that I took the job, and it was the minute that the press release went out, and it was on Twitter and all those things. There are people really excited about it, and that makes me feel really good.

Maybe part of what they're excited about is me, but really what they're excited about is Iowa volleyball getting better, so they're choosing to believe that I can do that, like Gary has. That's a good place to start from.

**Q. Your name has been mentioned before during job searches here. What made this one different? Why the timing?**

BOND SHYMANSKY: Timing is everything, and there was a point where Gary and I talked a little bit the last go-around, and it just didn't seem like exactly the right timing. I still had some things to grow and learn and do as a coach, and now I feel like I'm ready for that. Family things can always make it unique or different. Certainly the trappings that are here now in terms of the facility. I can't say enough about Carver-Hawkeye Arena, but you see it in all the facilities for athletics. You see it on the campus, it's growing, it's changing, but it's first-class.

So I kept walking around here when I was on my interview, and every time we turned a corner I wanted to be able to say, oh, wait, this is the problem, this is why maybe it's not succeeding, but I never turned that corner. I would turn each corner and go, oh, wow. I feel like I've been around college athletics for a while and I'm an adult. I shouldn't be dazzled by that stuff, but I was dazzled. It was really great.

What it made me think of is you start bringing recruits through here and boosters and people that want to be involved with the program and help it succeed, they're going to understand

that all of this is geared toward winning. It's all geared toward success. It'll have a lot of different shapes and forms in terms of win-loss column, in terms of graduating and having great young ladies in our program that are in the community doing great things, and then hopefully that are going out afterwards and getting fantastic jobs and impacting the world in some significant way.

**Q. What has impressed you the most about the players on the roster that you'll be inheriting?**

BOND SHYMANSKY: Yes, I've had a chance to meet face-to-face with several of them and talk to all of them on the phone, and you can just hear the excitement. You feel the energy that they have and the desire that they have to be great. I asked them very specifically what's your identity, what are we building off of, and they said work ethic. We're going to work really hard.

That's the supreme foundation. I have to work really hard to help this be successful. So do they. So does the administration. Everybody is going to work really hard. So that's a great place to start from.

I've had the fortune of seeing them play on video a couple times within the last year or two, and that helps me give an idea of where are they at technically, athletically and all that. Everything is here that we need to succeed. It's here. It's the people, it's the staff, it's the conference, it's the facilities, it's all here. So I'm not concerned about that at all. I'm really excited about it. It's just going to take some tweaking, take some motivating, maybe some technical changing or system changing. And I believe that what I like to do as a coach will help us win.

Hopefully I have the track record and success that the players too will believe that because that's the most important thing is the buy-in. Do we have, can we get collective belief, where they understand I will believe in them, they will believe in me; we will get to where we want to go.

**Q. Do you think being from Iowa City gives you an advantage that other head coaches haven't had?**

BOND SHYMANSKY: Yes, being from Iowa City definitely gives me an advantage as the head coach here because there's just no selling involved. I don't know exactly how to describe it, but I'm never, ever going to have to sell to a parent or a recruit why this is a great place and why the

education is great and why the community is awesome and why being a Hawkeye is special. I'm never going to have to do that because they're going to understand that I believe it. I am it. I am all of those things. I experienced all of those things.

That's a huge advantage.

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