

**April 15, 2015**



An Interview With:

## **SETH WALLACE**

SETH WALLACE: I guess I would say I appreciate everybody being here. I think our recruiting efforts since I took over back in July and leading through the season, which was obviously a tough start when you get here a month before you get started with camp and the season, but you've seen a little bit of change in our recruiting efforts. You've seen us probably cast a little bit wider net. I think we're trying a couple different tactics that are obviously supported by Coach Ferentz and certainly supported by this staff.

I think we're headed in the right direction. The big thing is just continuing to follow the foundations of this program with recruiting and who we're looking for, what type of kid we're looking for, that really hasn't changed since I got back. The nice thing was obviously being familiar with this program, the type of kids that we've won with here.

But we are casting a bigger net. We're being a little bit more aggressive on the front end. I believe it's paid off. This facility certainly has paid off. It is our showcase now. We've had a lot more kids on campus and even during spring practice we've had more than really we've ever had.

I would open it up for questions now if anybody is interested in asking anything about recruiting.

**Q. Do you have to cast a bigger net these days because of the direction of recruiting?**

SETH WALLACE: I think that's on two parts. Casting a bigger net has certainly provided us with a larger pool of candidates. There's plenty of good football players out there, and I guess it's more so on the front end that you've got to be a little bit more aggressive with the way that recruiting has changed and decisions are coming a lot sooner than they have in the past. There's a lot

of guys that are waiting, obviously, until -- they're not waiting as long to make those decisions, and they're bypassing in some cases their official visits just so they can get it out of the way and focus on their senior year and making those decisions at this point in time or throughout the summer.

On two parts, we've recognized that we can get into areas and have success and draw interest, but the biggest thing is being able to get ahead of the curve, which is probably the biggest change, just how aggressively we've been on the front end of things.

**Q. You've got two verbals. I know you can't talk about them, but how are you measuring your success or progress?**

SETH WALLACE: Well, I think success is -- obviously we're not -- there's no red flags going up right now that we've got X amount of commitments versus what other programs have, but the way that we're measuring it is in conversations that we've had with these young men, their parents, opportunities to be around them, having them here on campus during the months of January and February, and then as we've moved into March and April, having them here for spring practice, the opportunity to spend significant time with them is really how we're measuring it because it still goes back to relationships. Nobody is going to make a decision without having those relationships built.

We're, again, ahead of the curve or are moving a little bit faster than we have in the past, but it's allowed us to build significant relationships with some of these guys.

**Q. Have you been more aggressive with making more early offers?**

SETH WALLACE: Yeah, I guess we've fallen in love with some kids a little bit earlier than we have in the past, but a lot of that goes back to we've had conversations, we've had them on the

phone, we've spoken to high school coaches. We have an opportunity to speak with parents in some cases. But again, the whole aggressiveness is more on the front end. It has provided us with time, time to get to know these guys, whether they've been here on campus or we're able to at least see them in person when we were out in the evaluation or the contact period in December and January. It's been a work in progress, but it was by design when I got here, when we increased our staff. And those things are all -- they've already been put out there. That's why it's happened that way. We've got more eyes on the process now, and the staff has supported it, Coach Ferentz has supported it, and I think, going back to your question in terms of measuring success, we're seeing it. It's just a matter of time. These kids these days, they're making decisions much faster, but we've got to be willing to run the race with them and just make sure that we get them here on campus.

**Q. One of the things you guys have always talked about is the importance of getting kids on campus. Have you seen a correlation between offering kids and then seeing them visit campus?**

SETH WALLACE: Yeah, I think any time you extend yourself like that as a program and show that type of commitment on your end, yeah, they're going to be more likely to visit. That's part of it. Again, they've got limited time. In some cases finances are a part of this whole deal, and in order to go visit somewhere, in some cases that's not going to happen just out of curiosity. You've got to show a commitment on your end, and we've done that. We recognize that it's not going to be a split-second decision when they get here. They're going to go and visit other schools.

We've got to stick to the values of this program, and when a decision is made, hopefully it's made because of what this program stands for.

**Q. In this age of slow play, is that your way of getting the kids in the door?**

SETH WALLACE: Yeah, it's that time of the year. This is the discovery time of the year for these kids and their families, and whether it be spring break, which we noticed a pool of the prospects that came in during their spring break. We took advantage of that. They were here for spring practice. But I wouldn't say slow play.

You know, there are some that it's going to be slow played just because of where they exist in

relationship to Iowa, and we know that's going to take a little bit longer. We know that that unofficial visit may not take place until the end of May, June, in some cases July, and if for some reason based on our needs at each position we fill up before that, then that's part of the deal. But at least they know on their end, and they can start making plans at this point in time, and we've had a bunch of them that have already communicated with us that we'll be there in late June when you all have a big official visit weekend, and we'll see how the process goes between now and then.

But at least they know that there's a commitment on our end and that we've extended ourselves to them.

**Q. You talk about unofficial visits. This is kind of the age of the unofficial visit, right? Just getting guys in the door when they can and building that sort of familiarity, seems like that's kind of recruiting now?**

SETH WALLACE: Unfortunately that is this period of time. These guys are -- prospects are being pulled in every which direction, and the ones that we're chasing are the same ones that other schools in our league and other schools in other leagues are chasing, too, so they've got to make a decision based on where they choose to spend their time, where they choose to spend their finances, because it's all on them.

We just hope that by being aggressive on the front end and again, extending ourselves, building those relationships, that when that time does come and they're out taking these unofficial visits that we're on the list of schools that they want to discover.

**Q. Is it an advantage having the spring game later, in terms of getting kids on campus, when other schools' spring season is already complete?**

SETH WALLACE: You know, I don't know that you're going to see a huge list of visitors for our spring game. I think the spring game is in some cases a spectacle at different places. Ours here, it's -- it is the end of our spring season, but the visits that have allowed us to spend more time because of the different events that are on the schedule for that Saturday, the visits that actually have come to us during previous Saturdays, that will come during this week, come this Saturday, we're able to spend more time. As a staff we're

able to spend more time making sure that we fulfill their wants while they're here.

I mean, the spring game is nice. The spring game gets a lot of publicity based on who's sitting on the sidelines before the game starts prospect-wise, but at the end of the day, we're hoping that anybody that comes back for the spring game has actually been here on campus because you're a little bit crunched in terms of what you can do with an individual on that specific Saturday.

**Q. Has it been difficult selling this place to skill players?**

SETH WALLACE: You know, I don't know that it's a harder sell. I think using Eric Graham as an example is probably not a good one, just because of how recruiting was to him at that point in the year. It really didn't blossom until the end, and in some cases it blossomed just with Iowa.

But skill players are -- at the end of the day, it's still an attraction. You look at the skill players that we got from this past year and this year's signing class, there's some damned good ones. Those guys were attracted here for different reasons. It could be because they wanted to play in a pro-style offense, it could be because when they came up here, Iowa was the right fit for them, and they knew that by being a part of this program, for what it stands for and the values that are in place here, they knew that they were going to get a hell of an experience in college and college football.

I know that that's out there, that it's tough to recruit skill players here. I kind of disagree. It still has to be the right fit, and to me there's still a lot to sell with those guys.

**Q. You've offered to some blue-blood kids. Is there value just getting your name out there with those types of players?**

SETH WALLACE: Yeah, I think in two parts, yes. The other part is there's probably some guys in here that you could throw out names where maybe we haven't offered them, and some of you guys that are in tune with recruiting and our process and how we do things that you're probably raising your eyebrows as to why have they not offered these kids. It still goes back to it's not that we're offering guys just to get our name out there. They've still got to fit who we are and what we do offensively or defensively, special teams included.

I think, again, it's on two parts. The ones that we've offered, we like them. There's no

question about it. We believe that they fit who we are. But there's also those that I'm sure you guys are like, why have they not offered this guy. It might not be the right fit for one reason or another. It could be football wise, could be socially, academically. There's a lot that goes into it.

**Q. Are there one or two positions you guys are focusing on for the '16 class?**

SETH WALLACE: I mean, right now we've got on paper and pencil, we've got our needs by position, but that's always subject to change. There's so much that can go on between now and August, and then there's a lot that can go on between August and November that will change that.

I think that the number is probably pretty fair to say that it's going to be in the low to mid 20s, but to say that it's by position, to me there's a lot to be determined between now and November on those numbers.

**Q. Could you guys look at junior college in this next class just to kind of fill some needs?**

SETH WALLACE: Yeah, I think you've seen where we've shown some interest, a little bit with a junior college kid. But again, it goes back to -- I'm not saying that we wouldn't go that route. It goes back to is it the right fit. We've got a young man coming in this year not on scholarship, but we've got a young man coming from a junior college that he was the right fit, and we were the right fit for him. So to me, that's not where we spend a lot of our time, but if it is the right fit and we know it's the right fit because we've been able to touch base with those involved, then certainly we would show interest.

**Q. You're also coaching corners. How has that come along this spring?**

SETH WALLACE: I'm still the recruiting coordinator, as well, so at this point in time that's a lot more of it. I've got an opportunity to work with Phil and the rest of the defensive staff. When the time is right, I am working with those guys, I'm coaching those guys, but at the end of the day, it's still about making sure that our staff is headed in the right direction recruiting-wise.

**Q. What have you seen? Are you plugged in enough to know about position**

**battles, especially in terms of safety?**

SETH WALLACE: Oh, yeah.

**Q. With Taylor and Snyder there?**

SETH WALLACE: Yeah, I think you've got two quality candidates that are extremely green at this point. Both of them -- you guys witnessed the practice that was open to the public this past weekend. Both of them are well-qualified. They both lack experience, and that's where they're very green, and that shows up at times. But you talk about two individuals that are locked in, and there isn't a day or a period of practice that goes by that those two aren't competing their tails off. There's some other guys back there, as well, that probably don't get as much notice just because of the graduation and the opening so to speak at that spot. But the nice thing is you don't have to worry about competition there. Those guys are competing, and by doing so they're making each other better each day.

**Q. Greg Mabin had a rougher TaxSlayer Bowl. How has he responded the last several months and what's the competition been like at his spot?**

SETH WALLACE: He's fine. I don't know that that one game fazed him at all. There's plenty from last year that would show that he's a very good player. He's a competitor. That's what a lot of guys got to do these days. They're going to come across a day where it didn't wind up on their side. But he's done everything that we've expected this spring.

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