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Iowa Football Media Day Coach Quotes August 9, 2024

**Asst. Head Coach/Asst. Defensive Coordinator/Linebackers
Seth Wallace**

On staying at Iowa for another season:

“There have been a handful of opportunities that have come throughout the years. There’s a lot that keeps you here and keeps pulling you in the direction of this place. I think we are all very fortunate to work for such an unbelievable head coach. Someone that clearly does it the right way, is great with people and is tremendous with our staff and players. It’s exciting to come to work here everyday and I am very thankful and appreciative for this opportunity.”

On this year’s linebacking core potential:

“I think we are all fortunate. We’ve seen this take place a time or two before with the linebacker group and having a veteran group, you go all the way back to 16, 17 or 18, there’s been a couple years where we aren’t as veteran. The fortunate part is what our team gains from that, the leadership, experience, and veteran presence that’s really where we are reaping the benefits right now. The nice thing is that they’ve seen a lot of snaps, you don’t need them to be out there during the preseason as much which allows some of the younger guys an opportunity to get out there and see what they can do. That was Kyler Fisher and Jay Higgins a few years ago.”

On Jay Higgins:

“He has really invested himself, I would start there. Coach Lester made a joke the other day he walked into our GA office and Jay Higgins was in there watching tape and having conversation with some of our younger coaches on staff. You would think that at this time of his career some of that would back off but he loves the game, he loves football, he loves his teammates and he loves what we do defensively. It’s really fun to continue to see him progress.”

Comparing veteran linebacking core to younger players like Karson Sharar and Jaden Harrell:

“I very much so see the the same trajectory. There was a point where maybe there was a little bit anxiety that crept in when there was talk that Kyler could have left. Nick Jackson obviously was a step out the door until the NCAA granted him his opportunity and Jay had some things to think about. That anxiety it reduced well before those three guys came back because I am pleased with the group that is here. Unfortunately they are beating on a door right now that isn’t deadbolted but it is shut pretty good and we are going to see what will



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happen. There's a place and time for everyone when it comes to football and you just have to keep pushing and that's what those guys are doing right now."

On what he likes coaching the linebackers:

"It is right in the central part of our defense and it's unique here. Going back to when I came here in 2006 when I was a GA for Norm, there was an appreciation. You guys all know who Norm was, the type of person he was. Norm was as good to me as he is with anybody and I took full advantage at that time to try to get my doctorate in defensive football, specific to our defense. I had the opportunity to see some good players then, Pat Angerer and Abdul Hodge. So just the appreciation and what it means to our defense and what it means to the guys that are walking in the room looking that the wall behind them with all the players that come before them."



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Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks Tim Lester

On the expectations for the group:

“First, we are trying to set the standard of what we can do at the line of scrimmage and what plays we can get good at. The truth of the matter is, the plays I call in game one, we aren’t going to have run them thousands of times. How many reps can we get in walkthrough? How fast can we change this curve? There’s a normal curve to a new offense, no matter where you go. That’s the battle we’ve been in. We can put more plays in the more efficient we become and we are working hard at it. The guys are doing a great job.”

On biggest challenge:

“The buy-in from the players is always the biggest thing. You come in and you’re bringing a lot of new stuff. They have really embraced it along with the leadership in the room, especially the offensive line leadership. We have veteran quarterbacks, tight ends and running backs so we have enough veterans in the room. They’re excited and once they take ownership in it, it really gives us a chance to go.”

On the personnel fit with his style of offense:

“That was the biggest thing about the spring; trying to figure out what we have. What are our strengths; our offensive line, our tight ends and our running backs. I think our wide outs are very talented, they’re just young, but they’re getting better every single time we’re out there. It is my job to figure out what guys do well and put them in the best position. The personnel fits really well here.”

On the wide receiver growth trajectory:

“It’s huge when you’re young and unknown, right? The trajectory opportunity is huge. They’ve really taken advantage of it. It has been so much fun; they’re probably the one group that’s been the most fun to watch because it is leaps and bounds of improvement every day. They’ll do something and not understand how to attack a coverage and then the next day they do it right and they immediately get the gratification of getting themselves open and making a play. We’re going to have a good stable of guys in there, it will be interesting to see who wins all the jobs.”



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Special Teams Coordinator

LeVar Woods

On Rhys Dakin:

“He’s trying to be more consistent, he’s incredibly talented, gifted, and has a very strong leg. Just trying to work on his consistency from day to day, week to week.”

“I think he’s adjusted well. He’s been to America before which is a plus. I think he’s done well. The teammates like him, he likes the teammates, looks like he feels comfortable. Now it’s just getting him acclimated, and getting him ready for college football, and stepping on the field. Stepping on the practice field is different from walking out in Kinnick and 70,000 fans. Those are the things we’re working on from day to day, and at this point we’re stacking days on days and putting them all together.”

On differences between Rhys Dakin and Tory Taylor:

“Tory had never even been to the United States. Rhys has been to the United States, has family in the United States. So at least he has some familiarity coming in here.”

On recruiting Rhys Dakin:

“I think Tory was definitely influential in that. Tory had seen him and trained with him once before. He felt like he was an incredibly talented young man- and like he would fit well here at Iowa. Tory knows me, I know Tory, he knows my personality and the personality of Iowa and Iowa football. He was definitely a big advocate for that. But as for his ability, I got the chance to go over there and watch him punt and be with the guys over there that he trains with and how they go about their business. But getting the chance to go over there and see Rhys and meet his family, and for them to get comfortable with us, and us get comfortable with them, I think it’s a big deal.”

On Drew Stevens off-season:

“I feel like Drew has made huge strides as a person and a player. I feel like he had his best day today which is good. Went four-for-four today, which is good for him with a little bit of a challenging wind today. I feel like we see a different ball strike, a different person, how he carries himself about his business, much more mature person. It’s been fun to watch.”



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On emerging special teams stars:

“Honestly I think there’s a lot right now. We have a good, really deep pool of core players. Awesome guys who are helping out on special teams but also making a move on offense and defense. Kyler Fisher has done a phenomenal job on special teams as a leader and a support player, he’s been that for years. Some of the other guys, Zach Lutmer has done an excellent job, TJ Hall coming back from injury last year and he’s doing really, really well at camp right now on special teams and defense- those are two guys that jump out right away. A guy like Jayden Montgomery, kind of unheralded a bit, Karson Sharar, you can go down a list. There’s a bunch of guys right now that are playing really well.”