

# Big 12 Conference Football Media Days

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## Iowa State Cyclones

### Matt Campbell

#### Press Conference

MATT CAMPBELL: Well, I'll start with this. It's just a sincere sense of gratitude to be here at Big 12 Media Day. I would certainly thank all of you for all you do for the Big 12 Conference, certainly our football program.

For me it's an honor to represent Iowa State University, our athletic department, and certainly our football program.

To me, we were able to bring four great young men with us here today, two juniors and two seniors, that came with us. Our two seniors are on the defensive side of the football, two young men that have been just stalwarts of the success in our football program. Gerry Vaughn, one of the great leaders and linebackers in the Big 12 and certainly our football program, a guy that's really built his career from the ground up starting on special teams, and then really starting the last three years at Will linebacker.

And then T.J. Tampa. T.J. is one of the best young DBs in college football, a guy that his career has just grown and grown and grown over the last four years.

Really proud of those guys.

Then two juniors that are with us, two young men that in my opinion stand for how we do what we do at Iowa State. They've been three-year starters for us. Jaylin Noel at wide receiver, one of the talented tough character young men in our football program. His leadership has been really special to watch.

Then Beau Freyler, our starting middle safety. Again, a three-year starter for us on the defensive side of the football. Really proud of those guys.

I would just say from my standpoint, really since December it's been really fun to be with this football team and watch its growth happen. We've really kind of looked inward after a tough football season for us a year ago. That inward look at it really looking at the things that are really important to us when we're at our best, our culture, our



process, our people, and certainly our purpose.

I don't know if I could be prouder of our coaching staff, and certainly the young men and the growth that we've been able to make over the course of the last six to seven months.

Obviously with that said I'll open up any questions that you have for me.

**Q. I was wondering if you could give us any update on the gambling investigation and specifically the status of quarterback Hunter Dekkers.**

MATT CAMPBELL: Yeah, you know, right now for us, that investigation is ongoing. Just continues to not really have a lot of clarity to it, but I think we're getting closer to getting clarity.

The appreciation that I have is they've kind of given me the opportunity to be removed from that process and just give me the results once the results come our way.

I think what I would just say for any of our young men that either are or aren't involved in this is it's a great learning lesson. Part of what I love about teaching is you're teaching 18 to 22 year old young men. There's rules and regulations.

We'll kind of learn what happened in that situation here shortly, but it's a great teaching moment, and how to handle things when it doesn't go well, and how do you respond from that.

Once it's time to have clarity to that and then respond to that the right way, I know our football team and certainly the young men in our team will do a great job of that.

**Q. You go to two of the newcomers, Cincinnati and BYU this year. Your thoughts on them coming into the conference?**

MATT CAMPBELL: Well, you know, you just talk about both of those institutions, and the history, the success, the excellence that those two brands really embody, and then



two amazing places to go play football.

As a young kid, I always dreamed of playing against BYU, and that Provo area is something that I grew up watching those games late night on ESPN, and really look forward to the opportunity to go compete there.

Then obviously being a young man from the state of Ohio and the respect that you've had for the history and all the great coaches that have come through the University of Cincinnati, and obviously a great relationship with Coach Satterfield and the respect that I have for him. It'll mean a great deal for me to be able to go to Nippert Stadium and have the opportunity to compete there, as well.

In general a great excitement. We know it'll be a challenge because of the quality of coaches and the quality of teams that those two institutions represent, but I've always felt like it's great to compete against the best, and you feel like you've got two great opponents in both of those programs.

**Q. Last year we talked about tight end depth possibly being an issue. There was a drop from 68 percent of 12 and 13 down to 38 percent. Is the tight end depth ready to get back up to 68 percent of 12 and 13 usage?**

MATT CAMPBELL: What a great comment, and I remember that question. I was probably haunted by that mid-season a little bit. A little bit of that, honestly, we had some really tough injuries. Easton Dean who had really come on for us last year in fall camp was injured and really played sparingly for the first 70 percent of the football season. To get him back was huge.

Tyler Moore was a young player that got injured right at the start of camp and really played limited all season.

Then DeShawn Hanika really kind of grew as the season went. Not to make excuses, but those injuries, one thing, the positive about those injuries is it forces a lot of other guys to get on the field and have to play for us.

Stevo Klotz emerged. Obviously Easton was able to fight back, DeShawn Hanika really started to play great football the second half of the season, and then you talk about the underswell of youth in our program at that position.

I would tell you in deep at the tight end position as we've been since we've been at Iowa State. A lot of credit goes to the recruiting Coach Taylor Mouser has done for us. But also I would say the development that that group from the experiences they got a year ago to the opportunity to really grow and develop this off-season, we're really excited about what that group has got the ability to look like.

So great question.

**Q. Just a quick question about Ryan Clanton. He's your new offensive line coach. How have you seen the biggest improvement or changes among your offensive line, and where do you foresee the biggest changes being?**

MATT CAMPBELL: Yeah, you know, I think to me -- and let me just say this: We're excited to have Coach Clanton on board. Coach Clanton has got a great history of being a great developer. I think you look at his own collegiate career and his growth process and the success he had as a player to certainly what he's been able to do at Northern Iowa and the success that he's had at developing great offensive lines and great offensive linemen.

When I look at the growth of our offensive line in general, I think one of the big things was physical growth and development, and I think that group, whether you would say it was process or whether it was youth, that group needed to make big strides and big gains this year from a physical growth and development standpoint.

Then I think confidence. I think we know when you're talking about offensive and defensive line play, consistency of physical growth and knowing what to do, those are two critical pieces of having confidence as an offensive lineman.

I think both with Coach Clanton and then Coach Kagy, our strength and conditioning coach, I've really seen great physical growth and development over the course of the last four to five months, and I'm really excited. I really feel like we have elite pieces on that offensive line and elite young men that have the ability to really raise the level of excellence of our offensive line play.

But obviously we have to do it, and we have to prove it. We're really excited about the growth opportunities that are available for Coach Clanton and that offensive line.

**Q. You've been known as a developer of players. You've developed a lot of players, but now you're getting known as a developer of coaches. Nathan Scheelhaase take over your offensive coordinator. I remember when he was being recruited as a student-athlete. Talk about the confidence you have in him and the decision that went into making him your offensive coordinator.**

MATT CAMPBELL: Yeah. You must have been really young then because you still look great. We were all young at one point.

You know, I think the thing that I love about Nate is this: Nate, obviously a four-year starter at Illinois, a guy that has played the quarterback position. He's been in multiple offensive systems, went through a lot of offensive coordinators.

When we hired Nate, we hired Nate at 25 with very limited coaching experience. But there was something about Nate Scheelhaase to me that was really powerful, and yes, the football piece of it was one, but more than anything was the human, what he stood for, what he believed in, leadership intangibles, and why he was coaching.

His "why" was to make a decision in the lives of 18 to 22 year olds. To me that's what I love. That's my passion about coaching is the wins and losses are great, but developing the human beings is what I love most about my job.

Nate has already taken that opportunity, not just to be a great football coach but to how is he going to develop his staff in this offense and pour into them as human beings, as young men into men.

I think Nate has just got that special quality that draws people to him because he knows who he is. He certainly knows what he stands for, and obviously what he stands for are some of the great beliefs that I believe in, and that's not just developing great football players but developing great men, and Nate has already done a great job of that.

**Q. You've had top 10 defenses pretty much every season. Obviously you start off last year, get a win over Iowa, your biggest rival, but stumbled most of the rest of the way. What is it going to take to get to that next level and be competing for that Big 12 Championship?**

MATT CAMPBELL: Yeah, great question. The one thing that I've always said about our program, and you look at our seven, eight years, is we've been worthy to suffer sometimes. I think at our place, our ability and hopefully our humility to understand why there have been setbacks, and whatever has impeded us has been able to dissect that and then come together as one to empower us forward.

I think last year you can point to a lot of different things. There are a lot of things we did well, and there were a lot of things we didn't do well.

I think all of us, from myself to our assistant coaches to our players, having the humility to see where are our gaps, and how do we do a great job of filling in those gaps together moving ourselves forward, that's critical for us.

Our ability to have success at Iowa State is probably different than a lot of places. We've got to go up the rough side of the mountain. There's no easy fix, and we've got to win as a team. We're not going to have just human erasers just running all over the film. Our team has to play together to win football games.

I think we know that, and what I've probably been inspired as maybe about group I've been around since I've been at Iowa State is the rallying of our football team together to grow forward, to want to take the lessons we learned.

You could say we were a really young football team a year ago. We were the third youngest team in college football and sometimes we acted like it, and maybe sometimes we coached like it, too.

But the ability to learn and grow from what I saw a year ago and take the positive and negative and move forward, that's really what it's going to take.

We're going to have to win in the margins. We're going to have to -- when we're playing at our best, our detail and precision is as good as anybody in college football, and that's what it's going to take for us to have great success.

**Q. It's no mystery, every year the defense, Iowa State, Jon Heacock feels like one of the best units in the country. Can you talk about what Jon Heacock means to your program and your relationship with him considering you guys go back to your Toledo days?**

MATT CAMPBELL: Yeah. Well, our relationship even goes further back. As Robert wants to start aging ourselves, I'm going to go back to me as a high school football player. Coach Heacock was the head football coach at Youngstown State recruiting process with Coach Heacock.

His family, his father was an educator in the same area where my father was an educator. The relationship that we have had with the Heacock family and Coach Heacock dates back to a long time.

For me, trust is so critical in this journey, especially in college football, and it's a time in that relationships, continuity and trust, it's hard to find that.

But for me, that's what Jon has meant to me. A young coach, shoot, I'm only 43; still far from having all the answers. You can imagine what I was at 32, 33 years old as a young head football coach, and to have somebody like Coach Heacock come on board who had had head coaching experiences, who had been through the highs

and the lows that college football can bring, he's been a steadying force every step of the way for me.

I think what's been so rewarding is to watch the success we've been able to have on defense and him get the credit for it. Because I do, I think Jon is one of the great coaches in college football.

What we do on defense is not really what's special. How we do what we do on defense is what's made us really special, and it starts with his leadership. I think it's his humility to, man, be a great listener to myself or our assistant coaches, to have input, to have courage enough to stand up and lead the right way, and just like I talked about with Nate, that having a real relationship with the players, knowing that these are 18 to 22 year old men, our job and responsibility is still to build young men and to be a great teacher of young men. That's really what his greatest gift is.

I know we wouldn't be where we're at at Iowa State and I certainly wouldn't be where I'm at without his guidance, his relationship, and certainly his love for our players and our coaches. He's been nothing short of exceptional.

**Q. Matt, Iowa State is celebrating 100 years of Jack Trice. What's that mean to you? What's that mean to your program?**

MATT CAMPBELL: Yeah. I think for us, when I got to Iowa State, you were looking for glimpses of excellence and just a powerful story to rally around. I don't know if there's a greater trailblazer and a greater man of courage that sticks in the Iowa State University or certainly its football program than what Jack Trice has meant to college athletics and certainly Iowa State University.

As all of you, whether you know or not, Jack Trice, this young man at 18 years old leaves Cleveland, Ohio, to travel to Ames, Iowa to break the color barrier of student-athletes at Iowa State, and the courage and the resolve to make that journey, comes to Iowa State and in a game in Minnesota loses his life after that football game a couple days later.

To me, the spirit, the courage, and just who he was and what he was able to do for so many after him, it's been a great rallying point for our football program as we've continued to try to send this program to be able to tell this great man's story to the entire world.

It's another opportunity this year with his 100th anniversary of his death, to be able to tell how important he's been to our university but also how transformational he's been to so many of our student-athletes here at Iowa State. So

thank you.

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