

July 30, 2015



An interview with:

COACH PETERSEN

COACH PETERSEN: Hello, everybody. Thrilled to be here and get through this day or two, and it means we get to start playing football, and we're excited to get back out on the field. It seems like it's been a long time since we've been on the field since spring ball. I think our kids have worked really, really hard progressing and taking the next step.

So we're excited. It feels, being a year through it, it feels like the process is getting a little bit smoother, and we're excited to get out there. We have a lot of young guys that need every rep, and every minute we can get on that practice field. We're excited, like I said, to get out there in another week and a half.

Introduce our players, in the far corner is our running back, Deontae Cooper, and in the other far corner is our senior linebacker Travis Feeney. We're expecting big things from both of those guys. I think one of the keys to certainly our success and a lot of team's success is how well your old guys play. We know we're going to play young guys, and we know that they're going to improve and improve rapidly.

But the old guys that have been here are really anxious to see them play their best football. We don't have a lot of seniors, and Coop is technically a junior. He's been around for a little while so he's kind of like a senior. If these guys can take their next step in their progression and play really, really good football, we only have 13 seniors, we can have a significant impact on our team. So we're excited to see these seniors do some good things for the Huskies.

Q. You mentioned in your opening remarks that you know freshmen and young guys are going to have to step up and play. But realistically, how much do you expect them to contribute and who specifically are you working towards?

COACH PETERSEN: Yes, we are. We played eight true freshmen last year, and I don't know if we'll play eight again, but I know we're going to play a handful of them. We really like this recruiting class that's come in. I think there are some really talented guys. Some of the guys we're going to have to play out of necessity. But there are also a couple guys I think we can play just because they're that good. Who exactly that is, I think that's kind of the fun and intrigue of some of fall camp, and we'll figure that out in the first couple of weeks.

Q. What's been the biggest change going into the first year versus year two?

COACH PETERSEN: Year two here as opposed to Boise?

Q. Yeah, you were there, you learned the system?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, everything's completely different. First of all, it was so long ago I don't remember what year two at Boise was like it was so long ago. But I think when you come to a new place, it's significantly different than when I became the head coach of Boise. You made a few tweaks. It was part of what we were doing there already, so you make a few tweaks and away you go. That is an easy transition. Being a new head coach for the first time, that's always different, very different.

But it's the overall, being what the program's all about, a tweak here, tweak there, and keep evolving. That is a lot different than, okay, starting from ground zero, and nobody knows anything how you do things. So I think this time fast forward a year from now, it feels better to me, certainly, than it did just the kids, hearing it so many times really start to get what we're talking about.

Q. And a big part of that was Boise (No microphone). How was that adjustment process?

COACH PETERSEN: I remember when I first came here and took the job I was under no illusions. My opening statement, I think, was

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probably something to the effect that my football life got significantly tougher. So I was under no illusions. So all that lived up to the billing. Every week you've got to play your best. It's really hard to get momentum going because it's just such a tough, hard game every week. So it just makes you just really get back to your process and focus on this one game at a time corny coaching talk, but that's what it is. So, yeah, it wasn't different than I thought. I thought it was going to be hard, and it was hard.

Q. You've referenced that 18-month number a couple of times how long it takes to get everybody on board?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, I said 18 to 24.

Q. Is it looking like it will be closer to 24 or do you feel like you're almost there?

COACH PETERSEN: I think we're making good progress with those type of things. But I think it's going to probably be closer to the 24. I really do. I think when you get guys and recruit guys from the start that come in and it's like this is how we do whatever, they don't know any different. So it's a lot easier that process other than changing this is how it's done. We're going to do it this way now. That's always much more difficult. And just learning schemes and all of that and the young guys that we have and will play, it's probably going to be closer to that 24 months. It never stops. It's not like we got it. We're continuing building and working on that all the time.

Q. Jake Browning, thoughts on him and if he plays this year?

COACH PETERSEN: He certainly could be. So we have three quarterbacks in Jeff Lindquist, K.J. Carta-Samuels was a freshman that red-shirted last year, and Jake came in mid year. They all got three good reps in spring football. They're going to all three get really good reps in fall camp.

It always seems like the media kind of thinks we play our cards close to the vest and kind of know who -- we don't know. We really don't. I wish we did. I think your starting quarterback needs every rep he can get, let alone three guys that water it down, but that's just where we are. So as soon as we figure out who gives us the best chance, we'll take some time.

Q. Is he in the mix?

COACH PETERSEN: Jake is definitely in the mix, absolutely.

Q. How much of a better grasp do you think you got in April of those three with what they're able to do?

COACH PETERSEN: What they're able to do? I think the thing about Jake and K.J. is they've never been in a game. Now they've played a lot of football and they've been good players there, but that's a little bit different but I think we got a decent handle of where they are.

But everybody has to get better. That is the bottom line from Jeff to Jake. Everybody needs to get better. That guy you can see growing and getting better, that's probably going to be the guy.

Q. Where does Tony Rodriguez factor into that?

COACH PETERSEN: In an ideal world, Tony red-shirts. In an ideal world. He just got here. We're trying to figure out how he can call it and lineup formations. But he's studying hard and he's getting there. That's where I think in an ideal world he would be able to red-shirt and learn and grow and be in the weight room and all those type of things. But we'll just see.

Q. How did that come together and when did it come together?

COACH PETERSEN: What's that?

Q. With Tony.

COACH PETERSEN: We've been looking at Tony for a while and just analyzing the quarterback situation. We needed more arms and we thought he was a good player that was out there, available Seale that was underrated. So we had talked to him for a long time and really got to know him and thought he would fit.

Q. You came into this league really at a time when it's probably as good as it's ever been?

COACH PETERSEN: Yes, I did.

Q. Does it give you an appreciation for maybe a coach in the SEC who has had to try to make up ground when it's just so hard?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, I think that's a good point. I think it is hard to make up ground. You've got these teams that have been doing it for a while and really rolling in a good groove. I certainly understand being in a good groove and how hard it is to make up ground. But I think you know it's just as elementary as it sounds, just

staying to your beliefs and your process of recruiting a certain -- the OKG kids that are our kind of kids and are serious about that and what that means. And how we're going to practice, and just that developmental stage and not wavering from it. Eventually I think we can get there. I really do.

Q. You mentioned sticking to your beliefs, but coming into the Pac-12, do you think you've had to adapt or evolve your coaching style process recruiting or anything like that?

COACH PETERSEN: I think if you're not always 24/7 analyzing what you're doing, you're making a mistake in whatever field you're in. Now I think you've got to -- you can't be flip-flopping it all over the place and changing strategies every other month, but I think you're always looking at it and going, okay, what are the best practices out there? Are we doing them and missing something? And I think that's part of any good organization. We certainly try to do that ourselves.

Q. You mentioned -- is it a little bit more difficult to have some heavy hitters in this conference? (No microphone)?

COACH PETERSEN: I've had that question a few times. Is it easier recruiting now being at Washington? No, it's harder because of that reason. You're recruiting. It's all relative. Recruiting is always hard and difficult, but I think that's part of that process I'm talking about. I will never get caught up in the ranking star system. I actually take pride in maybe going the opposite way because it's a crapshoot after the time anyways. We take pride on this is our job is analyzing these kids and doing homework and research, and so that's part of it. But I think there are enough good players out there. The whole trick in the recruiting world, whether you're a coach or a recruit, is finding the right fit for you. Forget all the hype and all that stuff.

Do you fit that culture and those coaches and what they're all about in that locker room? And at the end of the day, that's what it's all about. We need to stay true to our beliefs there and find those kids that can figure that out. That's when good things happen.

Q. What have you seen out of Travis Feeney over last season? What makes you think he'll be a leader for this defense?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, I think Travis can be a -- I think if Travis takes that next step in his game, he's going to be a leader by the example

that he leads. He's tremendously, physically talented. He's still a true senior, so he's a fairly young guy. But he can run with the best of them. He's tall and long. He can cover ground. He's a physical player. So if he can have some luck and healthy and be one of those guys that can elevate to the next level. That's what we need. We need guys like Travis Feeney to take the next step to do what we want to do, and I have belief and hope and confidence that he can do that.

Q. What is that?

COACH PETERSEN: Just consistent player in terms of assignments and being a dominant player out there. He's been on the field plenty of times to know what it's like. I think it's all about consistency in everything we do in all of our lives. We all show flashes in some way or another. But the great ones are consistent day-in and day-out. We're hoping Travis will do that and take that next step.

Q. Travis mentioned the guys like watching MMA in their off time and some of them are doing some MMA training along with football?

COACH PETERSEN: Maybe that's our problem. Spending too much time watching MMA and not enough football.

Q. But they say it might help them with their training. Do you have any thoughts about that?

COACH PETERSEN: We have our strength coach who brings in different people, MMA, martial arts, all of it is quickness, hand placement, grip strength, all those type of things. I think it's smart when you're strength coaches are good in a lot of things. But if they're not experts in that, they'll bring them in and our guys gravitate towards that. Those kids work so hard all summer and all year long in that weight room, and anything we can do to freshen it up and bring some outside energy, I think is a good thing.

Q. You opened up the Boise can of worms?

COACH PETERSEN: Oh, you're going to put that on me like anybody here wasn't going to ask that?

Q. Haven't yet. You used the word awkward. How different is it for you?

COACH PETERSEN: At the end of the day let's look at it like this. If this would have been

a couple years ago and they're asking me and I'm at Boise, you want to play Washington? Yeah, okay. If I had any inkling whatsoever that I might be sitting here, that would be the last team out of 128 division whatever it is teams.

So, you know, just us being tied into that staff over there that are all good friends of ours. We recruited a lot of those kids. Makes it awkward. The fans are awesome and passionate over there, that whole thing. But at the end of the day, it's the first game. It's great for college football. Our guys will be excited to play because they know that Boise has a really good team this year, and it's going to be big.

Q. There was some talk when you first got here and whether it was rumor or actually happening, but did you ever consider trying to change that?

COACH PETERSEN: I thought that would be kind of ridiculous and selfish. So, you know, it's awkward for me, I get that. But I'm going to change this for everybody because it's awkward for me. That's not my style.

Q. Because it means a lot to them?

COACH PETERSEN: It means a lot to them, and I think it's good for college football. The only thing that's awkward because so many of those kids that we've recruited, and I haven't had any contact with those guys because we are playing them, so that's made it more awkward. Take all that out, and it's great for college football. Take me out.

Q. How quickly after you took the job did it hit you or did you realize this game was on the schedule?

COACH PETERSEN: I don't know when I remembered or knew or it hit me. You know it's a ways away. So you kind of say, oh, that game? We'll deal with that down the road. Well, down the road is coming.

Q. What kind of reception do you think you'll get?

COACH PETERSEN: I don't know. I think it's so irrelevant. I really do. It's so totally irrelevant in this whole thing. It's about the players. It's about the game. The Boise fans are Boise fans. They're all about the Broncos. It doesn't really matter about me. My concern is I have 1,000 concerns that are much more, maybe 2,000 that are much more of how it's going to go for me over there in terms of that stuff. Our guys have to

be ready to play good football. That's what I'm concerned about.

Q. You mentioned the players, but the coaches, (Indiscernible), has meant a lot to your success. What's that going to be like going against him? One of you has to win and one has to lose?

COACH PETERSEN: Not only him. But Coach Harris obviously go way back, but Julius Brown, and Marcel Yates and Scott and on and on and on. And the strength coach, we were with him for a long time and our equipment manager. I mean, we could go on and on. So that's what -- it just makes it different and awkward.

Q. On the other side of the coin you guys (No microphone) so your team will be playing against a lot of their own staff?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, good point. I'm not playing when we go to Boise. Coach Sark is not playing on that field, so it's about the players. They've got to play each other. That's where I think their focus needs to be. The Boise players will be focusing on our players, and our players will focus on USC players when we play, and that's what it's about. Everybody else wants to talk about this other stuff.

Q. It's still a long ways off, but what do you say to your players when they want to get ready for the same mentality?

COACH PETERSEN: USC will be one of the better teams in the country, and that's enough motivation right there and enough focus. If our energy and focus is on the wrong things, that will just have to do with us not playing our best ball. You can definitely be out of your emotional element, and you see that a lot. You can get too up for games and those type of things. So we'll deal with that down the road as well.

Q. Being on the other side of it, what are your thoughts on the blue as well?

COACH PETERSEN: That turf is still blue?

Q. It's still blue.

COACH PETERSEN: I thought the NCAA had changed it. Hey, I never knew what the big deal was anyway. So that's not going to affect. Again, if I was playing, it will have no affect, and it will have no affect on our players. We'll ask that discussion. That's truly how I feel. We would always kind of chuckle when everybody makes

such a big deal about it. The big deal is the guys in those blue uniforms, not the blue turf.

Q. What about you guys coming out of the other side of the tunnel? What's that going to be like for you?

COACH PETERSEN: The visiting locker room, coming out the other side. Like I say, by the time we get there, you're worried about your team. That you've prepared them well and they're ready to play good football.

Q. Was the hip injury begging him last year?

COACH PETERSEN: So, Cyler's a tough kid. He really is. He never missed a practice or anything, but it was bothering him, and it got worse after the season. It continually got worse. In fact, we had to take him out of his training. The one thing about Cyler. Cyler's a tough guy, that I know. So we had to take him out of doing some different running stuff and squatting and stuff because it was just too much, and it wasn't healing. Then when we really looked at it, it was going to maybe never heal the way it needed to. For him to get back to where he wanted to be.

Q. Do you think that affected the way he played last year?

COACH PETERSEN: I think there are a lot of things that affect your play. But there are a lot of guys that got to play injured, and he did.

Q. You mentioned last year and this year, what did you learn most about yourself and the defense?

COACH PETERSEN: I think the big thing is just really believing in your playing and staying with it, and knowing that you are where you are as a program and as a team, and what's the best. To me it's always about practice. It goes back to your practice and meeting preparations. We're always doing the best chance to win.

So there are certain weeks you go back and look and say, did we do the best? Did we do too much? Did we confuse them too much in doing those sorts of things? Those are a lot of things you look at. As you go through the second time, there are going to be guys more on the same page, and we can do a little bit more with them and those type of things.

Q. Coach, did you do anything a little different before the bowl game, the Oklahoma State game? You've been to a lot of bowls, but now you have a team that's going to be losing

a lot of the defensive stars to the NFL. Did you prep and give the underclassmen some more work?

COACH PETERSEN: We had 15 practices, so we gave everybody work. I think our coaches even had a scrimmage to buy time out there. So, yeah, so the young guys did get a lot of good work. Yeah, that's a whole thing, like analyzing the bowl situation, because that was a really perplexing game to us, because nobody wants to play in a bowl game that late unless you're playing in that tournament. Nobody.

So our guys really did a great job. I was very pleased with them how they prepared. They practiced hard, we went down to Arizona. They were focused. We went out and just didn't play well. So we've really tried to analyze that, what we missed. I think if there were two or three games that you could have back and you could have gotten over the hump. We could have had a really, really good season as opposed to where we were. So that's the stuff that kind of gnaws at you as a coach, like how do you fix that? How do we learn from that?

Q. Deontae said he would be the starting quarterback, have you seen his arm?

COACH PETERSEN: I have, and let me tell you, we'd be in big trouble if that's what we're left with. Better handing him the ball than letting him throw it.

Q. Deontae got a lot of praise for the way he bounced back and the setbacks. But as he deals with the personal tragedy of this off-season, has he kept that same demeanor and focus?

COACH PETERSEN: He is such a special guy. I mean, you take the football out of it, he's one of those interesting guys that you know he's going to do something special. He just needs to find his passion and meet the right people and have a little luck down the road. He's going to do something really cool with his life because to me he's got the it factor. Just if you talk to him long enough, it's like, wow, this is a really good person. I think that is the coolest thing about him.

Q. Most of his teammates were in middle school.

COACH PETERSEN: You're probably listening to Travis Feeney too much because he keeps joking with him that he's an old guy. But he is. I didn't even know that. I think that is the other thing that is so interesting about him. He blends

into all of our guys so well. You don't even think of him -- he's mature but you don't think about him because he's so much older as everybody because he relates to the freshmen who walk in the door as well as he does seniors in there. He's just got that unique gift that relates to so many people.

Q. Obviously you've placed more impact on Kyler. But when you replaced Kellen Moore at Boise and you have a multi-year starter who kind of becomes a superstar, is it different because you have so much time with that one quarterback and the team almost becomes kind of the guy who is out front and representing the team and you can rely on them so much? Is it much different replacing a guy like that compared to maybe a quarterback who is a one-year starter?

COACH PETERSEN: There might be a little more added pressure to that guy that's taken over. You try to take as much pressure off as you can, and there is a lot of pressure on those guys anyways, and you try to live up to somebody who has done so many good things. So it could.

So I think the big thing is, how long do you have with a guy that is behind how much time have you had to train him? That's the big question right there. And if you've had significant time in transition it's a lot smoother.

Q. Are you feeling any personal pressure to repeat the success at Washington that you had at Boise State?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, that's a good question. I got that earlier. I feel no more pressure, no less pressure than I did at Boise. That's just how we operate, and I feel a lot of pressure 24/7. That's just how we're made up. Nobody has higher expectations than me or our coaching staff. We get it. We know what we're all about. We've had tremendous success over there.

But I think Boise is a unique situation, and I think it will be very hard to replicate that type -- that many wins, that dominant wins anywhere. I mean, that's a unique place. Now, do I think that we can get Washington eventually up to competing for Pac-12 Championships? I do. Or I wouldn't have come here, and I believe that. But I think we're talking about apples and oranges.

Q. With the quarterback situation, what happened to Troy?

COACH PETERSEN: Troy transferred. I think he felt like he just -- it's all about that fit I was talking about in recruiting and he maybe felt he

was going to fit somewhere better and decided to move on.

Q. I know when you were at Boise and your players all knew each other's names and they spent time with each other and you preached that family bond. How important has that last 18 months been to get to know these guys and the significance of that bond as you start another year?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, as part of that culture we talk about. I think it's really significant. I think we made a lot of strides as a team, just simple stuff like that, getting to know each other and really trying to care about each other and not just have that dog-eat-dog locker room that all I care about is getting mine and trying to get to the NFL. I think that's a recipe for disaster.

So I think we've made a lot of en roes that way, and that's where it's going to take more time to get there.

Q. Talking with a couple of your players today, they said you really came in and put an emphasis on valuing not only football, but their life after football and education. How quickly were you able to -- was everybody able to buy in on all of that and did everybody buy in?

COACH PETERSEN: No, not everybody. But a lot of them are and have, and you can see when the wheels are starting to turn. And I have conversations with some of these guys that surprised me. It's like, oh, it's starting to click with him. They will get it. I know that through experience, it's just takes some time. Sometimes it takes four years for them to get it and figure it out. But eventually they're like, oh, I just feel like we and they are just cheating themselves if we're just there to play football. There is just too much there, and to get a degree.

I mean, that's not what this thing is about, just to get a piece of paper, it's about connections. It's about experiences. It's about learning and really using this opportunity we have to like change your life. I'm just passionate about that. So they're starting to figure that out.

Q. For you, the life changing move came 18 months ago. When you lived in Boise for 13-some-odd years. Does Seattle feel like home now?

COACH PETERSEN: Luckily, I live very close, so I kind of know that. But it is. I mean, it

takes a while when you live in a place for a while. And I always tell our freshmen, there are so many different season changes from fall camp, to summer training, to winter conditioning, to spring ball. I don't think it's different with the coaches just to go through a cycle. We know what they feel like, but to be in a place for a year before they feel like, okay, this feels comfortable to me now.

Q. Coach, we missed you at the Mountain West in Vegas the last couple of days. I'm going to ask you the same thing I asked those he coaches. They're in the same boat. A lot of them left and they don't know what to do. But there are different candidates. Varying answers from the coaches, would you consider rotating as a last resort, not at all, or yes. Bob Davie said he's probably going to use two quarterbacks. What is your thought on that?

COACH PETERSEN: I think Bob's done that a few times if I recall right. I don't think anybody likes that. Everybody likes to have the guy and say, here we go. We have the guy. That just helps everything. You can't just say that. If that doesn't give you the best chance to win, I think that would be short sighted. As much as I want to do that and say that, that might not be the best option for us. That might be, hey, we do use two of them. He does this a little better, and you figure out how to rotate that, or you figure like this guy's going to continue to grow. There are just different ways. I'd love to just say that's the guy, but it might not be that.

Q. Ask you about the other Kridhsen at linebacker?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, Kridhsen Bierria, he fits in good, and he fits in well. We're expecting big things from him. Another one of our linebackers. He played a little bit as a red-shirt freshman last year. We really like him and expect him to have a good year.

Q. (No microphone)?

COACH PETERSEN: Yep.

Q. What do you think he can do at the job?

COACH PETERSEN: He can do some good things. We saw that up close and personal. He's a good player and a heck of a competitor and can throw that ball. He's an accurate thrower. He had a heck of a day against us, so I'm sure he'll do some good things.

Q. Is he a perfect fit for what they do?

COACH PETERSEN: I know he's a perfect fit from what Eastern Washington was doing. I'm sure he'll fit really well there.

Q. Recruiting in the west and some new hot beds, Las Vegas has now turned into a real -- it's burgeoning and there are a lot of kids coming out of there. Are you going to make that priority to get a presence there?

COACH PETERSEN: We make everywhere in the west a priority. That hasn't changed for a long time, so we've got our footprint really hard here. Once we start to get out of the west, we always debate those things, and it's usually on a case by case basis. But I think that's awesome. I think it's great that Vegas is starting to pump out more guys that have grades and all those type of things because it helps the pool.

Q. The quarterback situation is one typically associated with leadership. But for it to still be determined and losing so many players last season, how do you address the leadership situation?

COACH PETERSEN: That's a good question, because that's a hard one for all those guys. I think any one of those guys that became our quarterback would do a really good job in the leadership department, because they're good guys and they get it, and they're really good to their teammates. They're hard working guys and they're passionate. They have all that. But I think until one of those guys is anointed that okay, this is the guy that's going to go, I think it's hard for everybody else to truly rally around and go that's our guy. So I think that's still a work in progress as well.

Q. What about on the defensive side of the ball?

COACH PETERSEN: I think some of the guys that have played -- I think it always starts with them. It doesn't make a leader, but the guys that have played significant and done some things, that is always the first guy they're going to kind of look to. Then if a guy is a good person and really cares about the team and they can trust him, they're going to really start to let those guys lead.

So it would go with guys like Travis. And we have some freshmen that have played. Eight of those freshmen got a lot of time. They're good guys and good players, so all this stuff is a work in progress.

Q. How important is it for someone like yourself who places such an emphasis on life and decisions off the field to have someone who can not only be a strong leader in the huddle and on the field, but also lead their teammates outside of football?

COACH PETERSEN: I think when your program really starts to move, the leadership comes from the locker room not the coaches. We kind of direct the ship a little bit, but the true heart and soul, the heartbeat of what you're all about, we're getting there. It will be another year. I think everybody will get what we're all about and be ready to roll in terms of leadership things for those players.

Q. A couple years ago the Pac-12 passed a rule that they had two contact practices a week. I know it was a rule before then. Have you seen any affect on defenses, particularly tackling techniques? Because that was the big argument against defenses would suffer because they wouldn't be able to tackle three or four times a week. Have you seen any impact the last couple of years?

COACH PETERSEN: No, not because of that. I really think this. If you're putting pads on three days a week in tackling, I mean, I don't know who does that. When I talk to the other coaches, I'm like who would do that? It's that fine line that you've got to practice some tackling things, but you're not going to do it three days a week. You might do it one. You can do some mirror stuff, but physical tackling, you know, again early in season we'll have the pads on. We always have done this forever. We'll put the pads on twice a week. Then we might have the helmet and shoulder pads, but it's not -- so when they mandated that rule I was like that might not be an advantage for us anymore because I want to play against teams that are scrimmaging and tackling. I think you're going to beat your team up and wear them out.

Q. So most people were probably doing that?

COACH PETERSEN: I think so. There might have been a couple out-layers that maybe, you know. Even if they wore the pads, I bet it wasn't really physical all three practices. It was more of a mental thing. And I get that. But I don't think you're going to be physical for three practices in a row when you're in season.

Q. In terms of actual physical, to the ground tackling, how many times do you do it

during the season? Once, twice, sometimes, none?

COACH PETERSEN: We don't hardly ever take our ball carriers to the ground. In fact, we're trying to wrap them up a lot. But if they're going to go to the ground because it would be a profile type tackle, then they'll tag them off. They won't wrap them up. The running backs take so much punishment anyways that we're not going to tackle those guys. The only time in fall camp we might do a live tackling drill every now and then. If we have a couple scrimmages, but other than that, they're not going to get tackled to the ground.

Q. Talking about Brian yesterday, he said one thing he was grateful for was you believing in a 29-year-old and giving him a chance to be an offensive coordinator. Why did you do that?

COACH PETERSEN: He was good, and he was around me for a long time. I remember when we hired and made him the coordinator and Justin Wilcox. They were both 29. And everybody was like, what is he doing? Well, I didn't know they were 29. I didn't. I was like why is everybody making such a big deal about it. And I kind of chuckled because they were totally ready for the job. And we had worked so long together, that I had no reservations. No doubt at all. He was very smart, very passionate about it, and he was going to continue to improve and all those things, and he did all those things. Those decisions were great. I have a lot of hard decisions, but making him the coordinator sure wasn't one of them.

Q. Were guys set to make a larger contribution, like Kendall Taylor moving on and transferring, is there anybody down to a walk on like Taelon Parson who you think could maybe step up and take on the extra load and contribute?

COACH PETERSEN: Yeah, we'll see about that. We have four returning scholarship receivers. Then we have a handful of walk-on guys that have been there. Then we have four other -- actually five other, scholarship guys coming in. So probably three of those scholarship kids will play that are new, and there will be a walk-on or two that probably can be. You just need that many guys.

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