Raiders hope Shell can restore team's heritage

ORTS FORUM

By DAVE ANDERSON

1988 New York Times

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Ken Stabler suddenly had been leveled by one of the Browns' passrushers. John Madden hurried onto the field in Cleveland that day in 1977 to check the health of his quarterback, and then the Oakland Raiders' coach began hollering angrily at the perpetrator.

After a few words, the Browns' pass-rusher took a few ominous steps toward Madden until Art Shell, the Raiders' huge All-Pro offensive tackle, spoke up.

"You just get back there," Shell told the Browns' pass-rusher, "and listen to the man."

Without a word, the Browns' pass-rusher turned and took John Madden's scolding. "When even an opposing player shuts up," Madden once recalled, "that's leadership." An Extraordinary Man

Here's explanation of Walden's problem and why catching up seems impossible

By TOM WITOSKY

Register Staff Writer

AMES, IA. - Jim Walden threatened again last week to quit as head football coach at owa State, citing his frustration with the NCAA for failing to recognize the problem he faces in getting enough scholarship players on his team.

Walden says he is tired of yammering about the problem - but after watching his outnumbered team defeat Tulane by one point in the last minute of their game he stopped caring what other people thought.

"I watched my defensive line take 85 snaps without any substitution. They put out so much effort that how can I get tired of telling people what kind of injustice they are suffering under?" Walden asked. Just What Is the Problem?

Iowa State's "Numbers problem"

NANCY IHLENFELDT/The Register



study by the College Football Association (CFA) supports his contention. According to a 1987 survey of Division I-A schools, those schools who lose more games than they win lose about 33 percent of their players annually to attrition and graduation. In contrast, winning schools lose about 25 percent.

Thus, a team like Iowa State with 75 scholarship players can expect to lose 25 players a year, the same number of scholarships it has available. If the CFA study is valid, the Cyclones will always have aboutd 75 players on scholarship.

On the other hand, a team like Nebraska with 95 players will lose about 24 players, one less than its number of scholarships. That means the Huskers will always have about 95 players on scholarship, if the CFA study is accurate. Q: Does it really make that much of a difference? A: Because of injuries this year and attrition from last year, Walden's team is now down to about 60 players who can practice and play. Last year, the Cyclones were relatively lucky in avoiding injury and went 5-6. This year, with more injuries, Walden says it will be very difficult to improve to a winning record. One big reason is that Iowa State must play Big Eight powers Colorado, Oklahoma and Nebraska in succession beginning next Saturday. "If I have anyone left, I guess we'll play out the rest of the season," Walden said. Q: But isn't all of this Iowa State's fault anyway? Why should they be bailed out? After all, they hired Criner didn't they? A: "That's the one that really makes me angry," Walden said last week. "My question is how much and for how long do you want this school to suffer? I didn't do anything to bring dishonor to this school, Criner did and he got fired. Why should the players of this institution be required to suffer because of the dishonor of that man when the school took the action they did? Will it ever end or do people just like whipping people?" Q: Does Walden have any chance to win this A: Not much, according to some experts. "I think there are a lot of people who sympathize with Jim at Iowa State and the folks at Kansas and Kansas State, but there are a lot of political considerations too," Charles Neinas, executive director of the CFA, said last week. Neinas said the CFA intends to sponsor a proposal to raise the annual limit back to 30 scholarships and another proposal asking the NCAA Council to appoint a committee to look at ways to help schools with low scholarship numbers, but isn't optimistic either will pass. "It is a situation where a lot of people are now looking for ways to cut expenditures, and trying to get the number of scholarships raised back up to 30 is an uphill battle. That's about all I can say," Neinas said.

And now 42-year-old Art Shell, always an extraordinary man, is the man on the Raider sideline, the first black head coach in the National Football League's modern history.

But the decision of Al Davis, the Raiders' managing general genius, really didn't involve Shell's being black.

It involved Shell being "silver and black," the colors of the Raider heritage that slowly deteriorated after the team moved to Los Angeles from Oakland in 1982, the heritage that all but disappeared under Mike Shanahan, the previous coach, who had no Raider heritage.

"I wanted a Raider," Davis was saying now from the Raider office. "When we went back to Oakland for an exhibition game two months ago, the one thing lacking was a link to the past in our coaching leadership."

Beginning in 1963, Davis coached the Raiders for three seasons with an offensive philosophy that two of his successors, John Madden and Tom Flores, understood and accepted.

More importantly, those two coaches had the players to make that philosophy work, notably Cliff Branch, the deep-threat pass-receiver on the Raiders' three Super Bowl championship teams.

"We make 'em cover Cliff Branch," Davis once explained. "That opens everything else

Change of Strategy

When Flores, now the Seattle Seahawks' general manager, departed as the Raiders' coach after the 1987 season, Davis imported Shanahan, who had been the Denver Broncos' offensive coordinator.

Davis supplied Shanahan with deep threats in Willie Gault, obtained from the Chicago Bears, and Tim Brown, the 1987 Heisman Trophy winner from Notre Dame.

"I thought Mike would build on what we had here," Davis explained. "Not change it." But change it he did.

But even after three years, many ISU fans still have problems understanding just what the problem is.

Many fans think Walden's problems stem from NCAA penalties levied at the end of the reign of his predecessor, Jim Criner. Actually, the NCAA penalized Iowa State just four scholarships, for the 1987 season. But Walden's scholarship woes did begin during the Criner era.

Criner began the 1985 season with 93 scholarship players, but that number fell precipitously in the next year as 11 players used up their eligibility and 23 more quit the team, leaving Criner with a nucleus of just 59 players for his 1986 team.

Even though Criner had 30 scholarships available for the 1986 season, he started summer practices with just 72 scholarship players, 21 fewer players than a year earlier. Since the Cyclones have been losing about as many players through normal attrition each year as they have scholarships available, they have made little progress in reaching the NCAA ceiling of 95 scholarship players, as the accompanying chart shows.

Here are some answers to some of the more commonly asked questions about the problems Walden is facing:

Q: Didn't Walden know when he took the job that there weren't many scholarship players left over from when Criner was coach?

A: Walden accepted the post on Dec. 15. 1986, about a month after Criner was fired. At the time, Walden knew Iowa State had 51 players returning for the 1987 season and that NCAA rules permitted schools to grant 30 scholarships each year with an overall limit of 95. Walden knew he had lost four scholarships due to the NCAA penalty, but he didn't know that Criner had given away five scholarships to walk-ons before he was fired. As a result, Walden went into his first season with 21 scholarships for the year, bringing the total to 72 scholarship athletes. But, between the time he took the job and the time summer practice began, another eight athletes either quit or flunked out. So he actually began the 1987

| Jim Criner | | | Jim Walden | |
|------------|--------|------------------------|--|--------|
| Year | Coach | Start of season (Gr | Lost aduation, inju grades, quit | uries, |
| 1985 | Criner | 93 | 34 | 59 |
| 1986 | Criner | 72 | 21 | 51 |
| 1987 | Walden | 64 | 18 | 46 |
| 1988 | Walden | 76 | 26 | 50 |
| 1989 | Walden | 75 | 23* | 52 |

* estimated

- 1985 Criner lost 11 of his 1985 players to graduation; 23 players dropped out of school.
- 1986 Four Cyclones from this team were lost to graduation; 17 quit.
- 1987 Walden gave out 21 scholarships for his first team at Ames, the NCAA allowed 30. Iowa State lost four scholarships to NCAA penalties and Criner gave five more to walk-ons before he left. By the time summer practice opened, eight Cyclones had quit or flunked out. Walden lost 10 to graduation; eight more quit or flunked out.
- 1988 Walden gave out his full NCAA allotment of 30 scholarships, but lost 26 players - 13 seniors, four flunked out, three with medical problems and six who quit.
- 1989 Walden gave out 25 scholarships, the new maximum, and will lose an estimated 23 players - 15 seniors by graduation and eight more for other reasons.

season with 64 athletes on scholarship.

Q: But he knew that going into the job? A: Yes, but there was something else. Three weeks after he took the Iowa State job, the NCAA — to the surprise and anger of many coaches - voted to reduce the number of scholarships awarded annually from 30 to 25 beginning in 1988. Walden didn't know that was going to happen and has had to live with that ever since. Q: Big deal. You are only talking about five scholarships per year? So what? A: Simple arithmetic. After the 1988 season, Iowa State lost 26 players. That means with 25 scholarships to be awarded,

the program actually lost ground - from 76 players in 1988 to 75 players in 1989. If they had been allowed to award 30 scholarships, the roster size would have been 80 at the start of practice this year.

Q: What happens at the end of this season? A: If nothing changes, Iowa State has 15 players who will play out their eligibility bringing the number back down to 60. Subtract another eight players for normal attrition, for 52. Add 25 and that gives you 77 or just one more than in 1988.

In fairness, Shanahan lost Brown to knee surgery, and Gault has been hobbling on a damaged ankle.

But with the Raiders off to a 1-3 start after a 7-9 record a year ago, Davis swallowed his mistake and installed Shell, who had been the offensive line coach, as head coach for Monday night's game against the Jets.

As long ago as 1983, the year Shell joined the Raider staff after a Hall of Fame career, John Madden predicted that Shell eventually would be an NFL head coach.

"Art's bright, he understands the game, and he's always been interested in all phases of it: pass patterns, the running backs, defense, not just his responsibility as an offensive lineman." Madden said at the time.

"Some players never think about anything but their own jobs, but Art always thought about everybody else's job. When I was coaching the Raiders, he used to come up to me and say, 'I was thinking last night, what if we did this. .. ' That's the way a coach thinks, but not many players think like that."

Not many Hall of Fame players have succeeded as NFL coaches, although Mike Ditka of the Chicago Bears and Raymond Berry of the New England Patriots have disproved that theory.

Too Introverted?

Even so, some people wonder if Shell isn't too much of an introvert.

"Art's quiet, but he's got something Madden had - he's a great communicator, a great teacher," Davis said.

"Art's a bright guy, a clean guy. And he played with all our great quarterbacks; Lamonica, Blanda, Stabler and Plunkett. He knows Raider football. Going into the '90s, he's the guy I want to restore the identity of this franchise."

Q: Are you saying that it won't ever get better?

A: That is what Walden is saying, and a

Rawlings still firm in views during TV panel

By TOM WITOSKY

Register Staff Writer

Fans concerned about the future of University of Iowa athletics should tune in their local public television channel at 8 p.m. Thursday.

President Hunter Rawlings has some answers for you, and they don't have a thing to do with the fortunes of any Hawkeye football or basketball team.

Instead, fans will get a clear glimpse of how Rawlings intends to change the tenor and philosophy of Hawkeye athletics. He discusses those intentions in a 90-minute roundtable broadcast titled "Athletics and Academics: The Uneasy Alliance."

Problems and Proposals

The round-table, led by former CBS television executive Fred Friendly, is an interesting though sometimes tedious review of the sorry state of ethics in college athletics in recent years and a look at what some of the academic, athletic, and media experts believe must be done to correct the situation.

Among those appearing on the panel with **Rawlings are Tulane University President** Eamon Kelly, Penn State football coach Joe

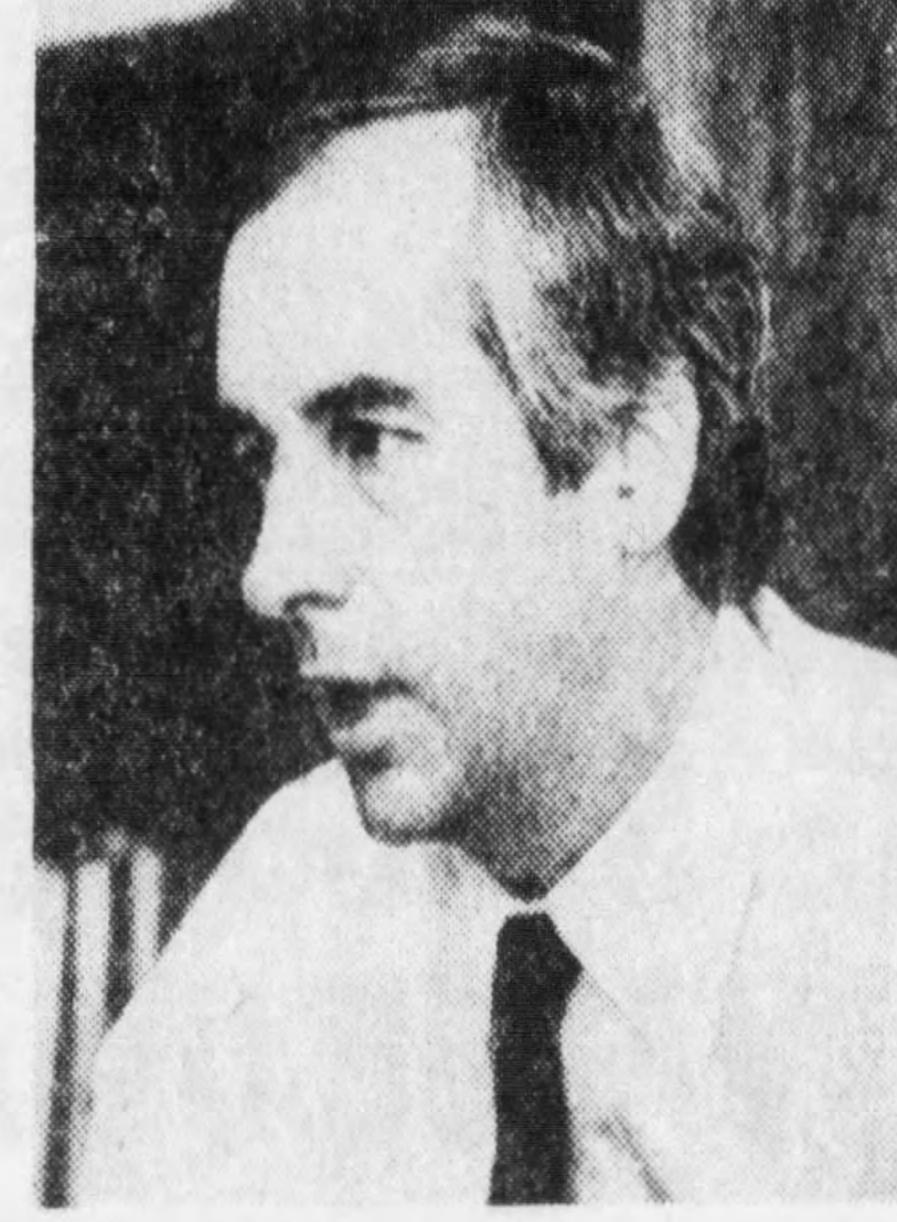
shenanigans and a review of several knotty ethical questions.

But for most Iowans, the center of attention will be Rawlings, who recently began his second year as the university's chief executive after a year in which he managed, it seemed, to throw the whole state into turmoil over the question of whether freshman athletes should be allowed to play varsity sports. In April, Rawlings stunned the state and his school when he disclosed in an interview that he intends to bar freshmen from participating in all sports within the next three years regardless of whether such action is taken nationally.

No Change of Mind

During the round-table, Rawlings shows he hasn't changed his mind.

At one point, an incredulous-acting Friendly asks Rawlings if it is true a University of Iowa athlete's curriculum actually included the courses of football, karate, tennis, billiards, ancient athletics, recreation and leisure, speed reading, introduction to military



Hunter Rawlings He values winning, too.

record by pointing out that he was 12 credits from receiving a degree from Iowa.

lum was indeed ludicrous."

When asked who is responsible for the problems in college athletics, Rawlings also is direct. "It is everyone's fault, because we have a major problem where there is an overemphasis on sports right now that has reached such proportions even the public finds colleges have lost their credibility."

A Question of Values

For those fans fearful that Rawlings intends to dismantle the powerful and successful athletic program, he also seems to address that question. Asked what he wants from a prospective coach, Rawlings says it's a question of values.

"I want to know if he sees himself as a teacher, who cares a lot about the 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds who come under his charge, and that he prepares them for a whole life and career. But I also want to know that he cares about winning, because indeed in every game there is a final score and you like to come out on top of that," Rawlings says.

For those who still have trouble understanding why college presidents are so concerned about college athletics, Tulane President Kelly explains it while discussing why he dropped the Green Wave basketball program after a gambling scandal. He says: "I acted to preserve the value of a Tulane degree. A university's stature in the world of higher learning is a precious possession. It is bound up in the diplomas we grant each year to our graduates and it is a source of lifelong pride for our alumni."

But where will this franchise's identity be located in the '90s, Sacramento or Oakland?

Sacramento is offering Al Davis many more millions but Oakland is offering him the opportunity to return the Raiders to the area he never should have deserted.

If he's intent on restoring Raider heritage, he should restore the Raiders to their silverand-black ancestral home with their silverand-black head coach.

Paterno, University of Tennessee basketball coach Wade Houston, NCAA assistant executive director Merrily Dean Baker, and journalists and broadcasters.

The lengthy seminar reviews virtually every major question and problem confronting colleges and universities and their coaches and players. There are segments on steroid use, cheating in recruiting, academic ficials actually have tried to defend Mitchell's

organization, and jogging, as well as advanced courses in bowling and slow-pitch softball.

The list is from former Hawkeye football player Devon Mitchell's academic transcript, which was disclosed during the trial of sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom. In the aftermath of the trial, some university of-

In this show, Rawlings doesn't offer a defense. He says this example is a primary reason why he has taken his position on freshman eligibility.

"It is absolutely true," Rawlings tells Friendly of the courses. "The only quarrel I have is that, as a classicist, ancient athletics I find very important. The rest of the curricu-



Art Shell With his Hall of Fame bust.

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A former wrestler pays tribute to his stricken coach

By MARK CHIRI

One of the biggest thrills of my life was shaking my high school coach's hand on the floor of Veterans Memorial Auditorium before the start of the 1987 state wrestling or 0-24. I remember how he'd stick his stupid, meet. Dennis Field was the coach at Woodward-Granger High School and I was the coach at New London High School. Ten years earlier. I had wrestled for him and had hoped to make the state tournament. Now I was coaching against him.

Much of the credit, drive and determination behind my success as a coach can be directly attributed to this man. As I write this, it's hard to believe he is struggling for his life from a form of lung cancer they can't identi-

Coach Field led a life that would be a role model to all young people. He never drank, smoked or cursed. He recently celebrated his 45th birthday, and he could always be found helping his four boys with their predawn newspaper routes.

What makes Coach Field so special is his caring and giving attitude about life. He cared just as much about you whether you were 24-0 Russian-looking hat on our heads if we were overweight and had to run in the gym at 7 in the morning to make it.

He always seemed to have that charisma about him. He wouldn't ask you to do anything he wouldn't himself do. I think caring and giving should have been his middle names seen in everything from the handshake or hug after a win or loss, to the breakfasts his wife and the cheerleaders made for us in his tiny home in Woodward. We learned unity and friendship, respect and admiration. Some of this has become even more evident now later in my life. He expected everything we had and we gave it.

If Coach Field has one fault as I look back, it might be that winning wasn't everything to him. People came first. That's not to say he

GUEST OPINION

wasn't successful, because Woodward-Granger has qualified at least one person for state for 10 consecutive years (including Field's oldest son, who is now a junior at Woodward-Granger). I can also remember one of our teams being rated first in the area. But people, not the won-loss record, mattered most to him.

To this day I do not know a better man. He did his work in the trenches of a small town's shadow with a small town's youth, where cameras and big city headlines are nowhere to be found. But he affected many lives just the same.

Coach Field has the respect of everyone who wrestled for him. We are better people for having known him. We all love him and wish there were something we could do. But

maybe we are doing it by being teachers. coaches, lawyers, businessmen and just good citizens who care about each other and are willing to give somebody a hand or a smile when things are tough. Dennis Field always

Coach, you have definitely left a lasting impression on my life, and I hope I can give back some of the things you gave me and instill those same values in the young men I will work with over the years. God bless you, coach.

Mark Chiri is a science teacher and the wrestling coach at New London High School.

The Register invites letters from its readers on topics of interest to other sports fans. Send to Sports Forum, Des Moines Register, P.O. Box 957, Des Moines, Iowa, 50304. All letters must be signed and carry an address of the writer.

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