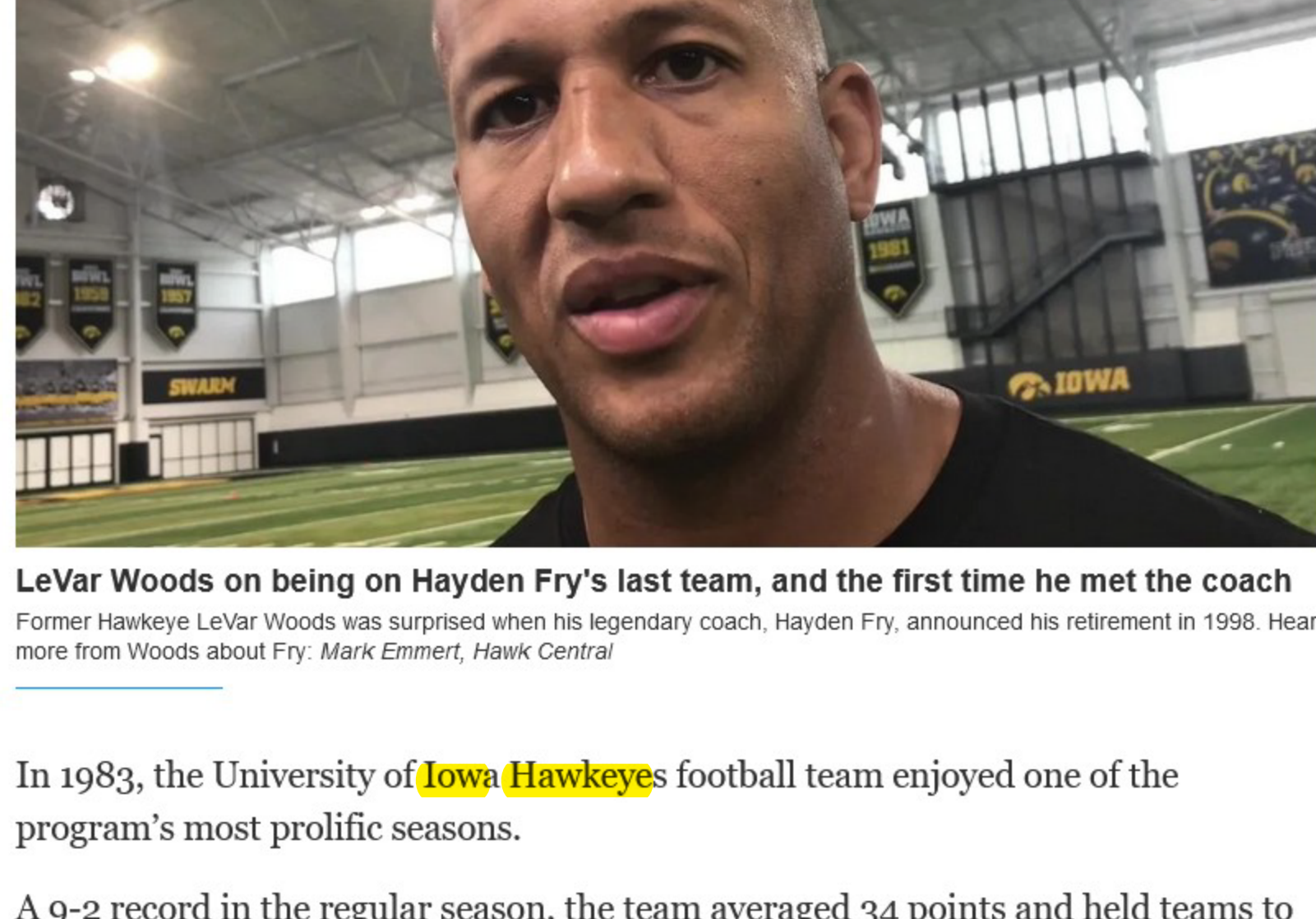


IOWA

## Remembering 1983: Iowa's legendary coaching staff and the team that helped establish Hawkeye football

Zach Berg  
Press Citizen

Published 11:39 a.m. CT Aug. 30, 2018 | Updated 2:17 p.m. CT Aug. 30, 2018



LeVar Woods on being on Hayden Fry's last team, and the first time he met the coach  
Former Hawkeye LeVar Woods was surprised when his legendary coach, Hayden Fry, announced his retirement in 1998. Hear more from Woods about Fry. Mark Emmert, Hawk Central

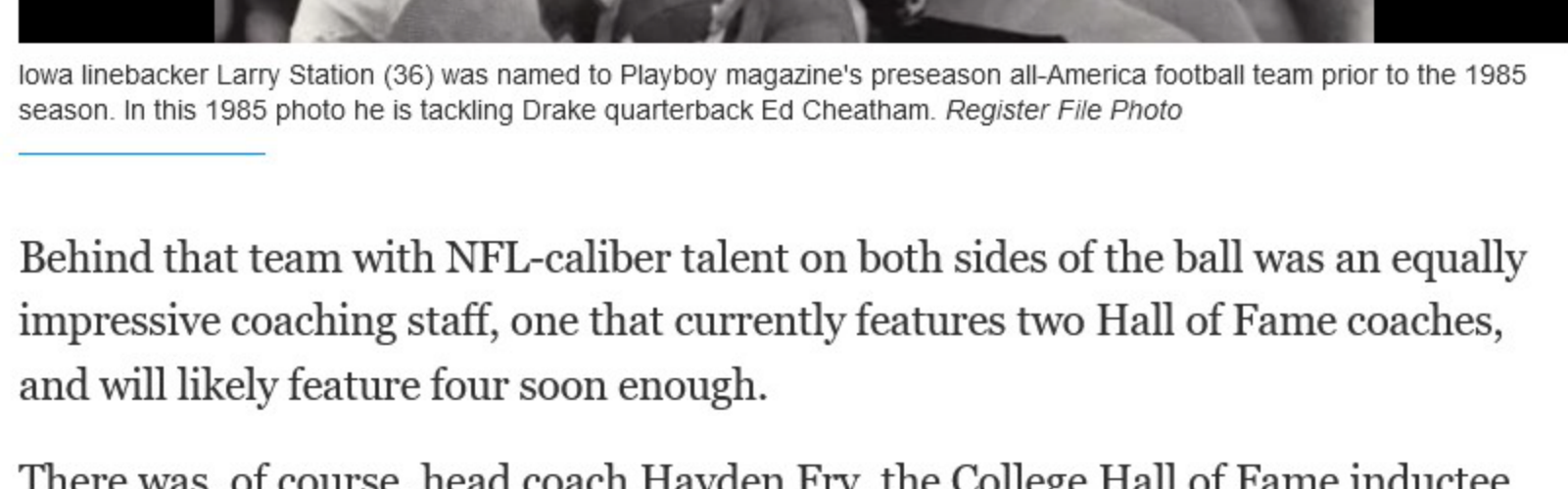
In 1983, the University of Iowa Hawkeyes football team enjoyed one of the program's most prolific seasons.

A 9-2 record in the regular season, the team averaged 34 points and held teams to an average of 15. Some scores were so lopsided it was silly: 51-10 versus Iowa State, 61-21 against Northwestern, Indiana was dropped 49-3 and Floyd of Rosedale went to the Hawkeyes after a 61-10 thumping of Minnesota.



A photo of the 1983 University of Iowa football team's coaching staff. Special To The Press-Citizen

Quarterback Chuck Long proved himself to be one of the great players in Hawkeyes history. Defensive back Devon Mitchell intercepted passes right and left. Larry Station showed his hard-hitting linebacker ways that would help him become a College Football Hall of Fame inductee.



Iowa linebacker Larry Station (36) was named to Playboy magazine's preseason All-America football team prior to the 1983 season. In this 1983 photo he is tackling Drake quarterback Ed Cheatham. Register File Photo

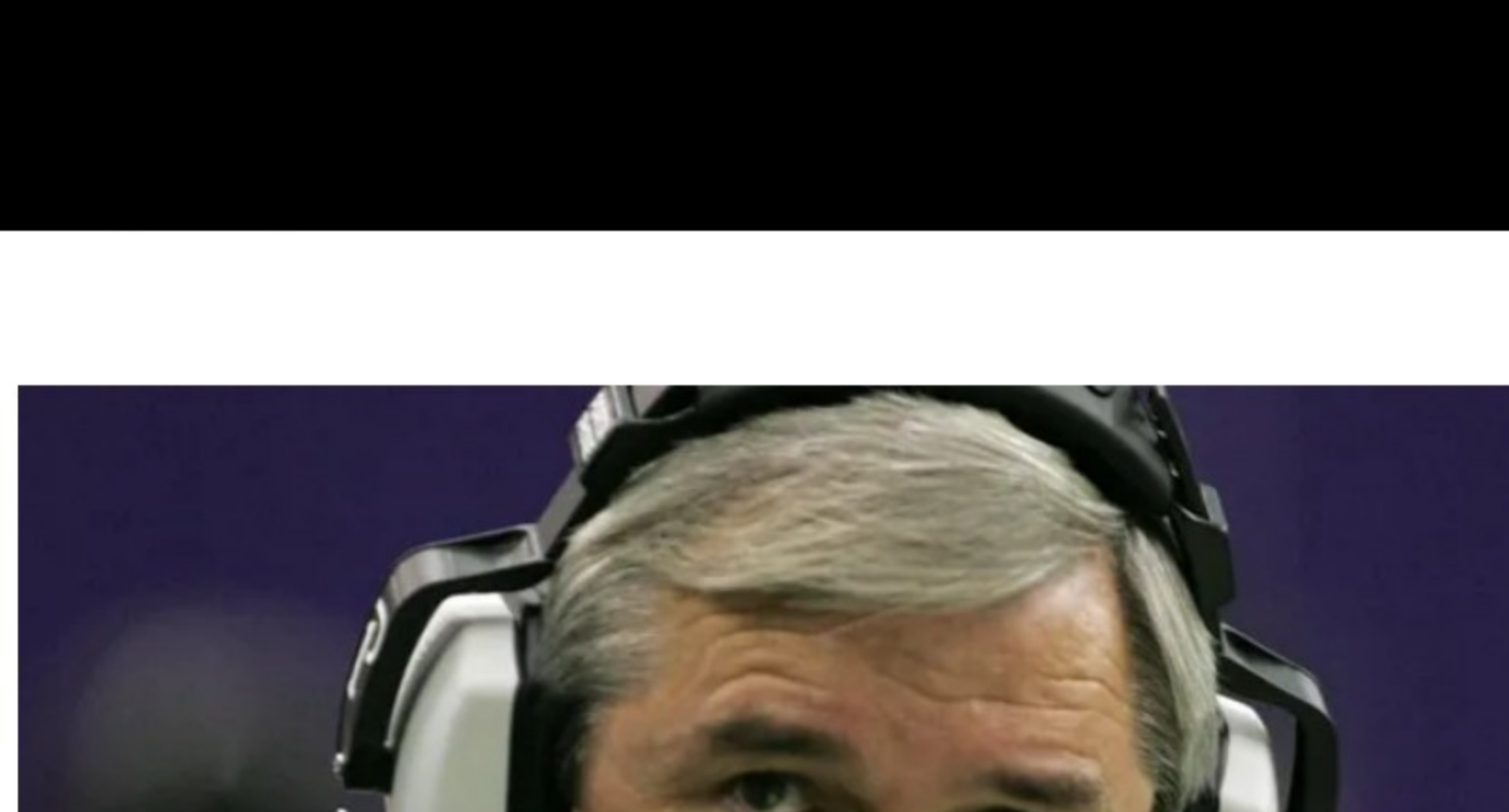
Behind that team with NFL-caliber talent on both sides of the ball was an equally impressive coaching staff, one that currently features two Hall of Fame coaches, and will likely feature four soon enough.

There was, of course, head coach Hayden Fry, the College Hall of Fame inductee and legend in Iowa and Texas for his astounding coaching skills. Barry Alvarez, Hall of Fame inductee in 2010 for his leading of the Wisconsin Badgers, coached linebackers.

Bob Stoops was then a graduate assistant after his tough-as-nails playing days at Iowa. He'll likely join the ranks of the Hall of Fame with his national title and his 17-year run at Oklahoma. Current Hawkeye coach, and likely future Hall of Fame inductee, Kirk Ferentz coached offensive line.

The future 11-year head coach of Iowa State Dan McCarney, the future 25-year head coach of Kansas State Bill Snyder, the longtime Iowa defensive coordinator Bill Brashier and the future head coach of Southwest Missouri State Del Miller were all on the coaching staff as well.

Don Patterson, the only man who coached with Fry all 20 years at Iowa who would later become the decade-long head coach at Western Illinois University, was on the sidelines, too.



REGISTER PHOTO: Cedar Falls, Oct. 23, 2004—Western Illinois Coach Don Patterson (in purple) at Western Ill at Cedar Falls. The Des Moines Register

"Coach Fry would say to us, 'One of my best talents is to do a really good job of assessing people,'" Patterson said. "Because of that, he was able to find that amazing coaching staff."

"He gave us, in so many cases, our first real job in football. It wasn't just Kirk and I."

To remember that historic team and coaching staff 35 years later, the annual celebration of Fry's legendary career and the coming Hawkeye football season, FryFest is celebrating that staff by reuniting them. With the 1983 Football Coaching Tree Panel at 1:30 p.m. Friday, and the following autograph session at 2:30 p.m. at FryFest, Hawkeye fans will have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet the legendary coaching staff.

Ahead of the 1983 reunion, Patterson discussed how Fry built the legendary coaching staff and the history of one of Iowa's greatest teams.

When Patterson was growing up in Corsicana, Texas, he watched "The Hayden Fry Show" on television. Before Fry became a Iowa legend, he had made himself into one of the biggest names in Texas football history. Coaching for a decade at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, from 1962 to 1972, and then building North Texas State's football program for six years, from 1973 to 1978, Patterson said "he had an amazing reputation in Texas."



Coach Hayden Fry and Chuck Long talk after Iowa clinched a Rose Bowl berth in November 1985. Press-Citizen File Photo

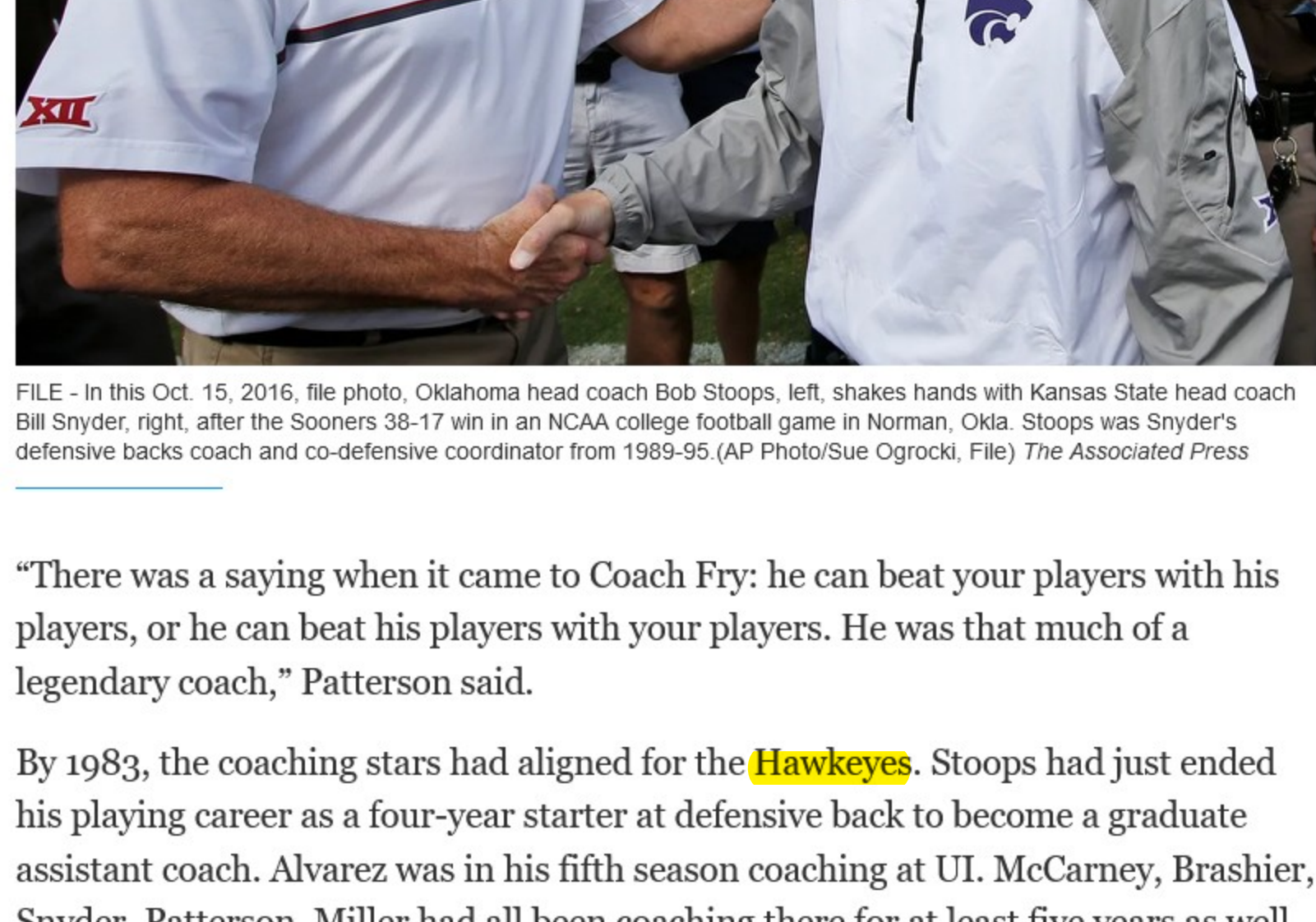
A 1973 Army graduate, Patterson remembers talking to other cadets at West Point about what they wanted to do after they were done serving. Patterson said, "I think I'd like to coach football."

He got a good job working at American Express first, but had a chance meeting with former UCLA head football coach Terry Donahue. The coach told Patterson if he really wanted to coach, he should become a graduate assistant on his staff. That sounded fun to Patterson, but he wanted to go back home to Texas. With some friendly connections, he got to Fry at North Texas and joined the staff as a graduate assistant.

"He told me, 'I was really intrigued that someone was willing to take a 90 percent pay cut to come work for me,'" Patterson remembered. It may have been a \$3,500 salary then, but, as he put, "I got a lot of raises over the years, so I was fine."

Fry's reputation has a winning ball coach, and a compassionate man, attracted the series of young coaches to him from across the country.

Patterson quickly learned what kind of football mind he was working for. After just one year at North Texas, Patterson and a lot of the staff were headed to UI when Fry was offered the job in Iowa City. With a 18-48 record over the last six seasons, it was a tall order for the Texans. After just two seasons, though, the Hawkeyes were tied for first in the Big Ten and had earned a Rose Bowl appearance.



FILE - In this Oct. 13, 2016, file photo, Oklahoma head coach Bob Stoops, left, shakes hands with Kansas State head coach Bill Snyder, right, after the Sooners' 20-17 win in an NCAA college football game in Norman, Okla. Stoops was Snyder's defensive backs coach and co-defensive coordinator from 1989-90. (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki, File) The Associated Press

"There was a saying when it came to Coach Fry: he can beat your players with his players, or he can beat his players with your players. He was that much of a legendary coach," Patterson said.

By 1983, the coaching stars had aligned for the Hawkeyes. Stoops had just ended his playing career as a four-year starter at defensive back to become a graduate assistant coach. Alvarez was in his fifth season coaching at UI. McCarney, Brashier, Snyder, Patterson, Miller had all been coaching there for at least five years as well. Ferentz was entering his third season as offensive line coach.

With stellar coaches and players on both sides of the ball, the season is long remembered by Patterson as "one of our very best offensive teams." Long threw 14 touchdowns and ran for five more. With Eddie Phillips and Owen Gill at running back and Romie Harmon and Dave Moritz, the offense could hurt teams in many ways, and did.

With only two losses — the 10-1 Fighting Illini at Champaign-Urbana and the 9-3 Michigan Wolverines in Ann Arbor — Patterson and the rest of the staff felt they had the credentials to be in one of the big bowl games. Ohio State, who Iowa beat and finished ahead of in the Big Ten standings, was picked for the Fiesta Bowl.

Sights were set on the Texas-based Cotton Bowl, but rumors have it that the University of Texas, who would play in the legendary bowl game, had some choice in who they would play. They picked Georgia, not Iowa. They'd be picked for the Gator Bowl and play, oddly enough, the Florida Gators. Though not a home game for the Gators, Gainesville was only 90 minutes away from the Jacksonville-based Gator Bowl. The Hawkeyes lost a heartbreaker, 14-6.



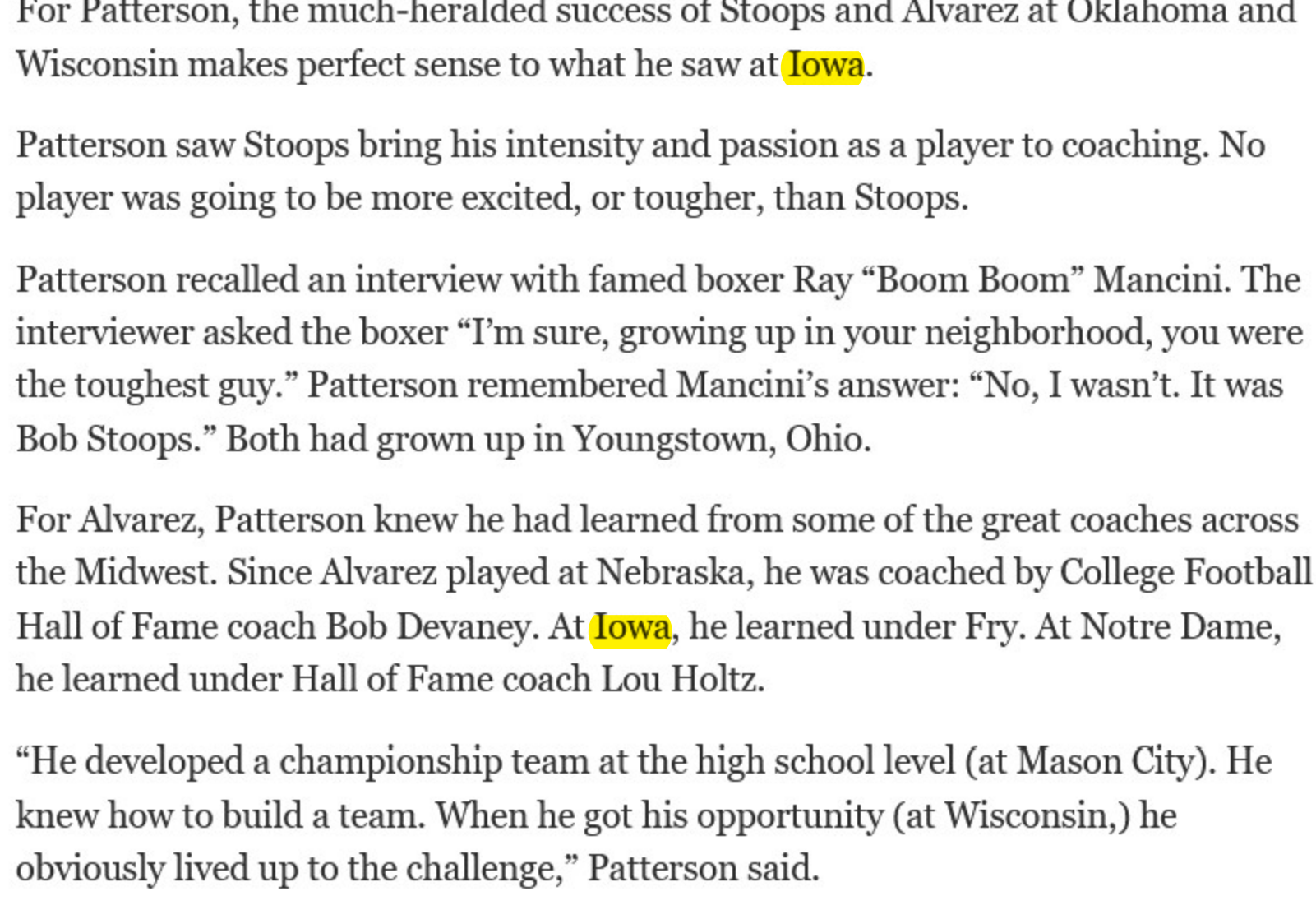
Kirk Ferentz, wearing a headset, stands next to Hayden Fry as they greet Chuck Long and Robert Smith on the sideline in a game played in the 1980s. Register File Photo

No matter what, Fry, his staff and his players had helped ensure Iowa would be perennial player on the national level in college football. Soon enough though, with his separate gains from Fry, that legendary coaching staff would start to go its separate ways.

Stoops would leave for Kent State in 1988. Snyder would leave for Kansas State, and Miller would join him, in 1989. McCarney left for Wisconsin in 1990. Ferentz left for Maine that same year. Alvarez would leave for Notre Dame in 1987.

Of course Patterson and Brashier would stay with Fry for many more years. As coaches with long hours and late nights, it proved hard for them to stay in contact with their old coaching buddies.

"We don't have time to socialize that much. We're all good friends still, but we're very excited to be reconnecting at FryFest. For that reason," Patterson said. "We all actually love going to the National Coaches Convention because it is a chance to socialize; that's almost the only time we can."



FILE - In this Nov. 8, 1997, file photo, Wisconsin coach Barry Alvarez, right, is congratulated by Iowa coach Hayden Fry after Wisconsin upset 12th-ranked Iowa 13-10 in an NCAA college football game in Madison, Wis. Alvarez, former Wisconsin coach and now the school's athletic director, was on Hayden Fry's Iowa staff from 1979-86 and lost his first five meetings with Fry until 1997. (AP Photo/Morry Costin, File) The Associated Press

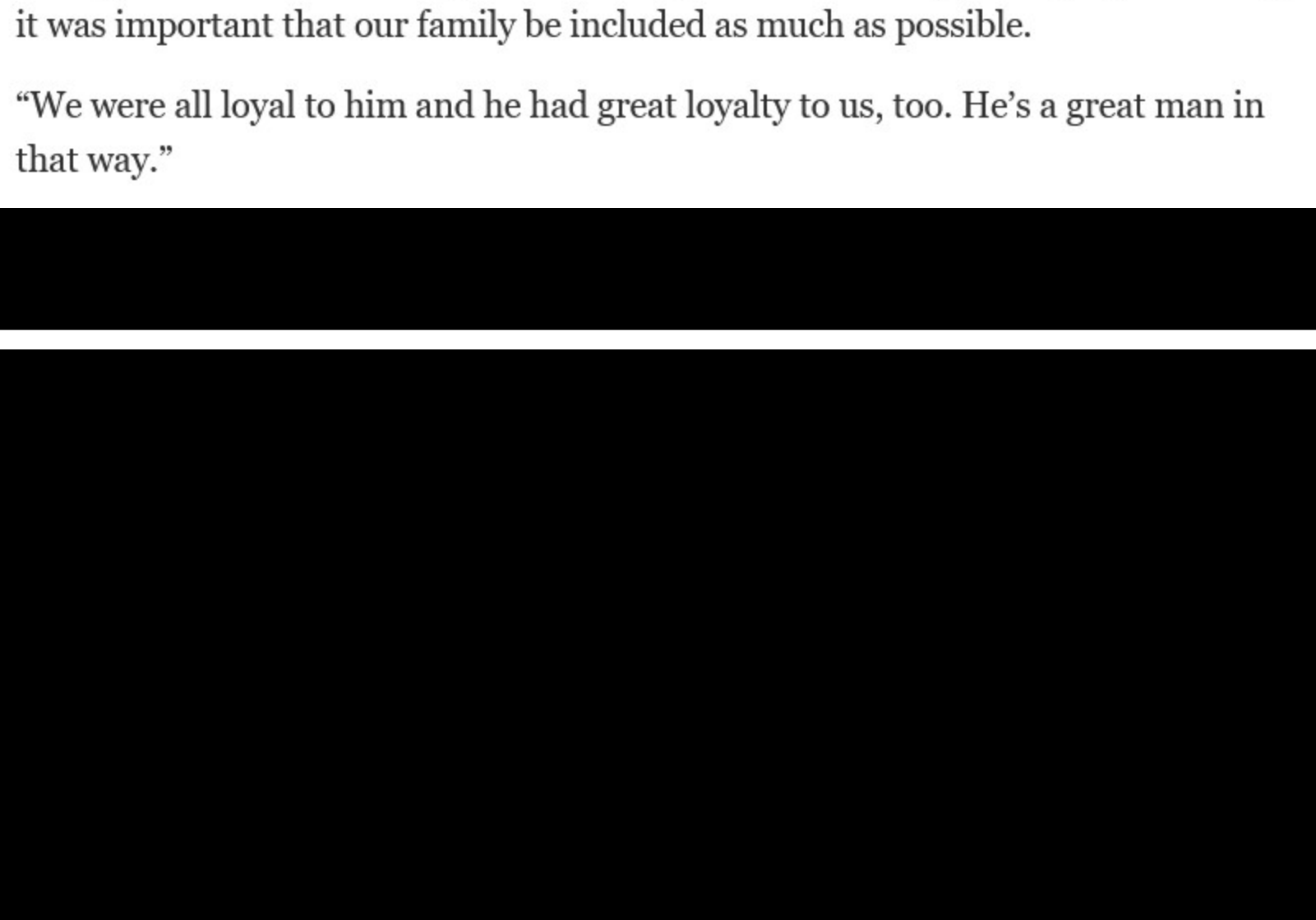
For Patterson, the much-heralded success of Stoops and Alvarez at Oklahoma and Wisconsin makes perfect sense to what he saw at Iowa.

Patterson saw Stoops bring his intensity and passion as a player to coaching. No player was going to be more excited, or tougher, than Stoops.

Patterson recalled an interview with famed boxer Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini. The interviewer asked the boxer "I'm sure, growing up in your neighborhood, you were the toughest guy." Patterson remembered Mancini's answer: "No, I wasn't. It was Bob Stoops." Both had grown up in Youngstown, Ohio.

For Alvarez, Patterson knew he had learned from some of the great coaches football the Midwest. Since Alvarez played at Nebraska, he was coached by College Football Hall of Fame coach Bob Devaney. At Iowa, he learned under Fry. At Notre Dame, he learned under Hall of Fame coach Lou Holtz.

"He developed a championship team at the high school level (at Mason City). He knew how to build a team. When he got his opportunity (at Wisconsin), he obviously lived up to the challenge," Patterson said.



Iowa football head coach Kirk Ferentz poses for a photo during the Iowa Football media day on Friday, Aug. 10, 2018 in Iowa City. Brian Powers/The Register

"My guess is that Wisconsin football has never had a period that was more successful than what Alvarez had."

But all of those individual successes can be tied back to one man and one place: Coach Fry and the University of Iowa.

"He was a good boss, obviously. He's such a compassionate person. He valued family," Patterson said of Fry. "Even though we worked long hours, night and day, it was important that our family be included as much as possible."

"We were all loyal to him and he had great loyalty to us, too. He's a great man in that way."