

Furrow gives J-Hawks 'real deal' at QB

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 11 August 2014 19:56 - Last Updated Monday, 11 August 2014 20:20



Cedar Rapids Jefferson football coach Brian Webb was a little skeptical the first time he heard that a talented quarterback from Indiana would be joining his team this season.

Then Webb watched film of Jesse Furrow in action at Pendleton Heights High School, where he passed for 2,147 yards and 20 touchdowns last season.

Case closed.

"I knew he was the real deal. Pretty exciting," Webb said at practice Monday after watching Furrow throw the ball.

"We're very fortunate that he moved in. He's quite the talent. We're very fortunate that he's part of what we're doing."

Furrow's father, Lynn, is the new pastor at Springs of Life Church in Cedar Rapids and the family moved into the Jefferson district this spring.

Furrow thinks the move to Cedar Rapids will help his development as a quarterback because of Jefferson's style of play.

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"It's different, moving this late in your high school career. You don't usually leave school right before your senior year," he said. "I think being here helps me for college, being recruited and stuff like that.

"This offense is geared a little more toward a college offense, so I think it's going to help me. It's been good."

Furrow attended numerous college camps this summer and has received interest from Drake, UNI, Winona State and Minnesota State-Mankato, but there have no offers yet. Webb expects that to change.

"Many colleges have called me and said they're interested in him," said Webb. "He's a relentless worker. He's almost a 4.0 student. He's everything you want a quarterback to be. He picks up the concepts very easily.



"He's got all the intangibles to play college football at the highest level. His fundamentals are just incredible," said Webb. "Without a doubt, he would be an asset to a college football team. That's his goal."

Furrow stands 6-foot-1, which might not fit the profile for a quarterback at a major Division I school, but Furrow demonstrated a strong, accurate arm in practice Monday with a series of short, medium and long passes that hit receivers in stride.

Furrow consumed the Jefferson playbook once he enrolled in school.

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"As soon as I got it, I looked at it and studied it," he said. "It's been great being out here (at practice) and being able to do it."

Furrow has four brothers and two sisters, including a brother who is a tight end at Wheaton College, and he's called upon his brothers to be his receivers for extra work.

"We were in the yard throwing it around, going through the routes, so that was good to be able to do that," he said.

Webb has been using Furrow to help tutor the younger quarterbacks in the Jefferson program, even though Furrow is the newcomer. "I'm going to use as much of his knowledge and expertise as I can during the year he's here," the coach remarked.

Furrow has already made an impression on his new teammates during the spring and summer.

"He's a great leader," said senior Kelly May, an offensive and defensive lineman. "He's doing a good job. I think the team really listens to him."

Webb thinks he has the receivers, running backs and linemen to complement Furrow. The J-Hawks were a one-dimensional club last season with quarterback Layne Sullivan the leading passer and runner, but

Sullivan is playing at Wayne State (Neb.) now and Furrow has stepped comfortably into the job.

Webb thinks the J-Hawks will have good skill people with Manny Olutunde, Bryce Lund, Tavian Rashed, Mason Furnish, Jacob Beaton and others. Jefferson has approximately 50 players on the roster, about 20 more than two years ago when Webb took over.

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"We've got depth," he said. "It was funny, going into our meeting Sunday and putting up the depth chart, we went 'Holy Cow, look at all these kids!' All the coaches had a big grin on their face because we were excited to see the depth."

Dalton Kuehl, a 6-foot-6, 249-pound offensive tackle and defensive end, likes what he's seen of the J-Hawks this year. "We're hoping to get to the playoffs," he remarked. "That's our goal."

Jefferson football has suffered through a long dry spell but appears headed in the right direction after 1-8 campaigns in 2012 and 2013 under Webb.

"We talked to the kids all summer and we talked to them at the meeting today about three things we're very confident we can get accomplished this year," said Webb. "Number one is having a winning season. It would be the first time in 13 years.

"Number two is going to the playoffs. It would be the first time in eight years. Number three is winning a playoff game. It would be the first time since 1991."

Webb said it would be a big boost for the Jefferson community if the J-Hawks could accomplish all three goals this year. "It's something that's desperately needed," he said.

Jefferson opens the season against Cedar Rapids Washington on Friday, Aug. 29 at Kingston Stadium.

2014 SCHEDULE

Friday, Aug. 29 - C.R. Washington

Friday, Sept. 5 - Prairie

Friday, Sept. 12 - at Davenport North

Thursday, Sept. 18 - at Davenport West

* Thursday, Sept. 25 - Kennedy

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- * Thursday, Oct. 2 - at Cedar Falls
- * Friday, Oct. 10 - Waterloo West
- * Friday, Oct. 17 - Waterloo East
- * Friday, Oct. 24 - at Linn-Mar

- * District games